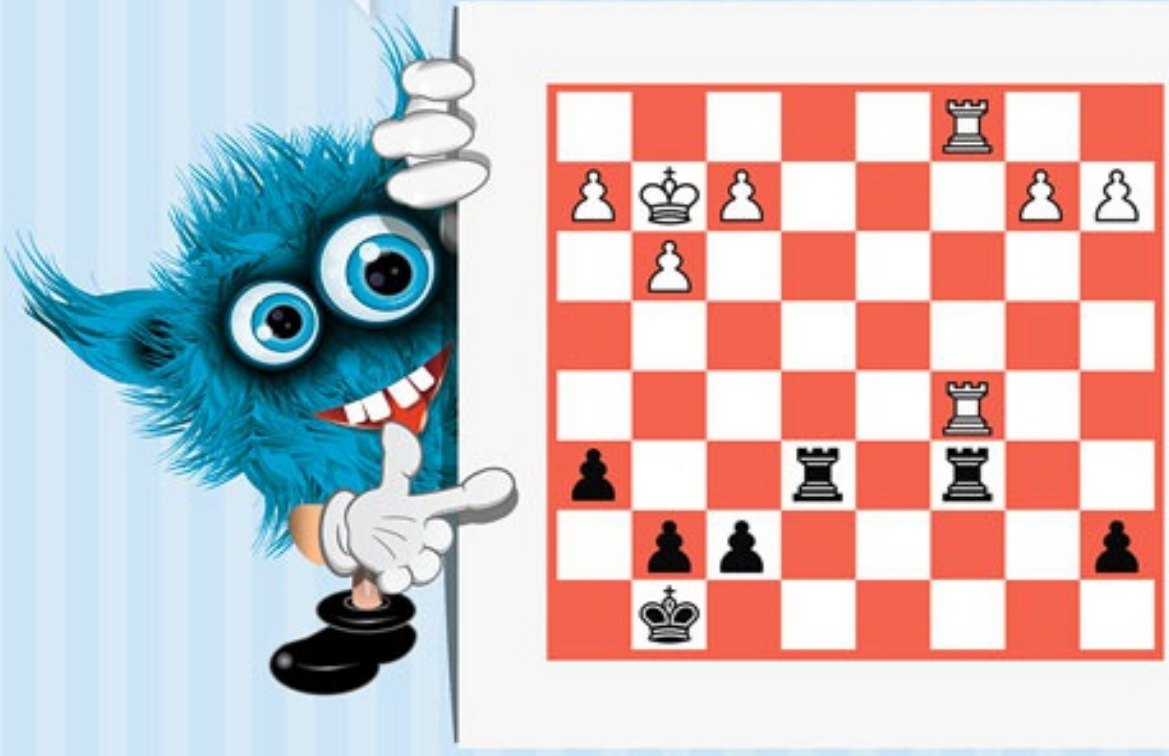
Efstratios Grivas

MONSTER YOUR ENDGAME PLANNING

Volume 1



Chess Evolution

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Efstratios Grivas

MONSTER YOUR ENDGAME PLANNING

VOLUME 1

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KEY TO SYMBOLS

= Equality or equal chances

⩲ White has a slight advantage

⩱ Black has a slight advantage

± White is better

∓ Black is better

+– White has a decisive advantage

–+ Black has a decisive advantage

∞ unclear

⩯ with compensation

⇄ with counterplay

↑ with initiative

→ with an attack

∆ with the idea

□ only move

N novelty

! a good move

!! an excellent move

? a weak move

?? a blunder

!? an interesing move

?! a dubious move

+ check

mate

FOREWORD

The MYEP series offer training on a vital subject, the choice of the ‘best’ available endgame plan. As is commonly accepted, a correct Evaluation of the position, a strong Plan and an accurate Execution are the three important factors that separate ‘the expert from the amateur’.

In a way, efficient training on the three above mentioned concepts can help a chess player mature and lead him to new successful paths.

The today Author has at his disposal powerful databases, tablebases, analysed material, books and by adding his knowledge, you will get what you are looking for!

The endgame is the phase of the game that it has been extensively analysed and formed to concrete conclusions, although in nearly all the books I do know, very little space is dedicated to forming plans.

I think this is because of space limitations and because it’s a difficult theme that doesn’t looks too interesting for the readers. But a modern chess player cannot really choose what he likes or prefers — this has nothing to do with openings!

Today we have shorter time-controls and there isn’t really enough time to dig on the subtleties of each ending.

You have to know and to repeat knowledge; don’t be carried away by the usual myth of the ‘chess talent’. As I repeatedly wrote and proved ‘talent is the excuse of the failed’.

‘Unfortunately’, the modern chess player is entitled and forced to work more than his predecessors. The modern chess trainer as well needs to prepare more delicate themes, understand them and teach them as well to his students. So, there is plenty of room for everything and for everybody who is thirsty for knowledge.

Knowledge is the key word. And knowledge is absorbed sub-consciously; it is impossible to remember everything you study. So, it is highly important to work with good material and good trainers in order to improve and get higher in the Chess Olympus Mountain.

Nowadays the help of the Silicon Monster (chess analysis engines) is quite valuable, as it can save an author countless hours of analysis and checking. But still the role of the qualified trainer remains important; he knows where the truth is — he knows what to keep and what to throw away...

I do not like to claim that everything I wrote is perfect and completely sound; I always think of the surprise factor; I just try to present my thoughts honestly and with responsibility.

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE BOOK

Back in 2007 I published my first English language book on planning (Modern Chess Planning — Gambit), which was later translated and published in the Greek, Spanish and Iranian languages, making it a best-seller. In 2019 I published a two-volume series called ‘Monster Your Middlegame Planning’ and now it was time to do the same on the Endgame! All four books are published by ‘Chess Evolution’.

The format is the same as in MYMP, with 13 thematic chapters, where in each of them 6 tests are included (in each volume). Each theme is analysed by modern concepts and tips, which will drive the

reader to the right path. For me solving the tests is not the most important feature. Understanding them and learning how to do the job in an over-the-board game is far more important and what counts at the end of the day!

With this book-series I have sought to provide a training guide that will be helpful mostly to players in the 1500–2200 range — corresponding to a lower club level up to those with aspirations for a FIDE title.

Of course, the books may well also be useful for players weaker than 1500, or for those stronger than 2200, but this is a decision these players should make for themselves!

In this book there are 78 tests, each based around a game. In each of these tests, the starting point is the first diagram. There is an evaluation of the diagrammed position, which helps the reader to understand some important facts about the position itself.

A presentation of three possible plans follows. Then the reader must decide which is the most valuable/best plan. The best plan receives a maximum of 50 points. The other, less good, bad or indifferent plans normally receive some points or none at all, depending on their actual value and correctness. Some of the plans receive no points at all; they are just bad!

After completing the work on each test, the reader must take a look at the solution, where he can find the answers. In the solutions, the game is analysed until its end, so the reader can better understand why the rewarded plan was the 'best' in the position and how it worked out. There are a few examples where the best available plan was overlooked, but these are exceptions and the games are nevertheless quite interesting.

By this point, you will have received some very good training. But then, it will do no harm to measure your 'strength' on this subject. The maximum score is 3.900 points and you should divide your total score by 1.5:

Total Points	**Planning Strength**
2400–2500	Grandmaster
2300–2399	International Master
2200–2299	FIDE Master
2000–2199	Candidate Master
1800–1999	National Master
1600–1799	National A' Category
1400–1699	National B' Category
1200–1399	National C' Category
0–1199	Should try harder!

As one might notice from the score-table, expectations are a little higher than usual for the categories

listed, as in this book the evaluation of the position is given by the author beforehand, and this is a great help for the reader. A correct evaluation of any position is one of the most significant factors in chess, but that could be the subject for another book.

It is now time for you to work and train on that important chess concept, the plan. Have fun and train well!

Sharjah, 2019
Efstratios Grivas

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank Mr. Manolis Kotsifis for being the first tester and proofer of the book, advising me with some important thoughts and suggestions.

DEDICATION

This series is dedicated to my parents, Father Georgios Grivas, who died on 2010 and Mother Katina Griva-Bouli, who died on 2015. Finally I understood what means to be an orphan...

THE ENDGAME

150 years ago the quality of played end games was quite low, as chess-players were reaching it quite rarely!

As strategy and manoeuvres were starting to overcome tactics, more and more endgames were suddenly seen. So, a need for endgame material was essential.

'Basic Chess Endings' (abbreviated BCE) is a book on endgames which was written by Grandmaster Reuben Fine and originally published on October 27, 1941.

It is considered the first systematic book in English on the endgame phase of the game of chess. It is the best-known endgame book in English and is a classic piece of chess endgame literature.

The book is dedicated to World Champion Emanuel Lasker, who died in 1941 (the year the book was published). It was revised in 2003 by Pal Benko.

'Basic Chess Endings' was written by Reuben Fine in only four months and was published in 1941 by McKay (a division of Random House) in hardback. The book used the now obsolete descriptive chess notation and used the old system of using the abbreviation 'Kt' to stand for knight instead of the more modern 'N'.

In a 1984 interview, Fine said that it took him three months to write the book. He said that organising the material gave him no trouble, but it was hard work coming up with example positions. He created many of the examples.

There was a Hardback Limited Edition of 500 signed by Ruben Fine sold by USCF in the 1940s. The hardback edition was reprinted at least as late as 1960. The copyright was renewed in 1969 as the book went through many paperback impressions. It went through ten printings in paperback by 1981.

The original book contains 573 pages and 607 diagrams of positions. Many other positions were given by listing the location of the pieces rather than showing a diagram. The 2003 revision contains 587 pages with 1330 positions, most with diagrams.

Of course many other good books followed, mainly those of Yuri Averbakh, Vasily Smyslov and Paul Keres. But all of them had some analysis flaws as well — it was rather difficult to be accurate...

COMPUTER EVOLUTION

The computers' evolution changed everything in the way we learn and analyse endgames today, at least in some important degree.

Nowadays chess players have access to many good and accurate endgame books, mainly because of the tablebases, which changed our endgame vision.

These tablebases contain the game-theoretical value (win, loss, or draw) of each possible move in each possible position, and how many moves it would take to achieve that result with perfect play.

Thus, the tablebases act as an oracle, always providing the optimal moves. Typically, the database records each possible position with certain pieces remaining on the board, and the best moves with White to move and with Black to move.

Tablebases are generated by retrograde analysis, working backwards from a checkmated position. By 2005, all chess positions with up to six pieces (including the two kings) had been solved — this is what we call today the Nalimov Tablebases.

The tablebases of all endgames with up to six pieces are available for free download, and may also be queried using web interfaces. They require more than one terabyte of storage space.

By August 2012, tablebases had solved chess for every position with up to seven pieces (the positions with a lone king versus a king and five pieces were omitted because they were considered to be 'rather obvious') — this is what we call today the Lomonosov Tablebases. The size of all tablebases up to seven-man is about 140 TB.

The solutions have profoundly advanced the chess community's understanding of endgame theory.

Some positions which humans had analysed as draws were proven to be winnable; the tablebase analysis could find a mate in more than five hundred moves, far beyond the horizon of humans, and even beyond the capability of a computer during play.

For this reason, they have also called into question the 50-move rule since many positions are now seen to exist that are a win for one side but would be drawn because of the 50-move rule.

Tablebases have enhanced competitive play and facilitated composition of endgame studies. They provide a powerful analytical tool.

Of course we can expect the 8-pieces version but I feel that it will be a bit delayed!

Chess players tend to think that theory only applies to openings. This is a very wrong attitude, as logic and practice have proven that theory counts for every part of a game.

ENDGAME THINKING

'To learn and to play endgames well the chessplayer must love endgames' — Lev Psakhis.

Different kinds of endgames have specific characteristics and rules. Every serious player must know many typical positions and main principles of all types of endings.

That knowledge should help us during the game, but it is not enough to be a good player, not yet. There just too many different endings, some of them with two or more pieces, some very complex.

To be comfortable and play well those complex endings requires specific knowledge and specific ways of thinking. We will call it 'endgame thinking'.

First of all we will separate endgames into two categories:

SOS Tip 1 — Endgame Categories

1. Tactical — Tactical complex endgames must be treated as a middlegame.
2. Strategical — Pure Endgames.

As in the middlegame our thoughts are busy with calculation based on the specific characteristics of the position.

But more often in our games, as practice proves, we have so-called strategical endgames; the endgames

where even computers have difficulties to find the best move. These are the endgames that do not rely on calculation.

It is known from the time of Jose Raul Capablanca that in strategical, positional endgames we have to think by plans, schemes. Variations and calculation plays a secondary role.

First we have to understand where to put our pieces; to find an idea for improving position. After, we start to form a plan. This is what we call ‘endgame thinking’.

Thinking correctly, in the right order, will significantly simplify the process of calculation...

SOS Tip 2 — Endgame Thinking

1. Piece placement.
2. Plan forming.
3. Do not rush!

So, how to approach ‘endgame thinking’, how to switch the right button in our brain. The Russian master Sergei Belavenets, great chess thinker, gives the following great advice:

‘After tactical complications, when our brains have been busy with calculation of beautiful variations, the exchange of pieces might follow, and some kind of prosaic endgame arises...

Every player has to spend a few minutes, if the clock allows, just to relax, and to calm down your emotions in order to look differently at the position. This investment of time will pay back later in the game.

I am well aware that this advice was given before World War II, when they had very different time controls.

So do not waste your time, just switch on the button in your brains, just remember that positional endgames require ‘endgame thinking’ by schemes, by plans.

And do not forget to respect your opponent’s ideas. The art of endgame play is how to achieve your plan and subdue the opponent at the same time. And this series is here to help understand it!

THE GOLDEN RULES OF THE ENDGAME

The endgame is the moment of truth. It is the phase of the game where we will try to reap the seeds of our effort, regardless of whether that is the full point of victory or the half point of the draw.

In the endgame the significance of errors increases, as the opportunities for correcting them are few.

The following rules are considered to be the Golden Rules of the Endgame. They were recorded by GMs **Reuben Fine** and **Pal Benko**, two of the world's greatest experts in this field:

1. Start thinking about the endgame in the middlegame.

2. Somebody usually gets the better deal in every exchange.

3. The king is a strong piece: Use it!

4. If you are one or two pawns ahead, exchange pieces but not pawns.

5. If you are one or two pawns behind, exchange pawns but not pieces.

6. If you have an advantage, do not leave all the pawns on one side.

7. A distant passed pawn is half the victory.

8. Passed pawns should be advances as rapidly as possible.

9. Doubled, isolated and blockaded pawns are weak: Avoid them!

10. The easiest endings to win are pure pawn endings.

11. Passed pawns should be blockaded by the king, the only piece that is not harmed by watching a pawn is the knight.

12. Two bishops vs bishop and knight constitute a tangible advantage.

13. Bishops are better than knights in all except blocked pawn positions.

14. Do not place your pawns on the colour of your bishop.

15. The easiest endings to draw are those with bishops of opposite colours.

16. Rooks belong behind passed pawns.

17. A rook on the seventh rank is sufficient compensation for a pawn.

18. Not all rook endings are drawn!

19. Perpetual check looms in all queen endings.

20. Every move in the endgame is of the utmost importance because you are closer to the moment of truth.

Of course there are plenty of other guidelines for dealing with the endgame. One of them goes as:

1. Activate you king.

2. If you have more pawns than your opponent, exchange pieces not pawns.

3. If you have fewer pawns than you opponent exchange pawns not pieces.

4. Try to create a passed pawn.

5. Protected passed pawns are very strong.

6. Outside protected passed pawns are usually decisive.

7. Try to promote a passed pawn.

8. If your opponent has a passed pawn, try to blockade that pawn.

9. Bishops are generally stronger than knights.

10. Bishops of opposite colour increase the chances of a draw.

11. Be aggressive with your rooks; if you choice is between defence and counter-attack, always counter-attack.

12. Rooks belong behind passed pawns.

13. Know the basics.

EVALUATION — PLAN — EXECUTION

The most important element in modern chess practice is probably correct planning. The plan is associated with evaluation and execution, three valuable concepts that cannot be separated and which most of the time determine the fate of our positions.

During my training sessions I do ask from my trainees the famous EPE procedure, as below:

SOS Tip 1 — EPE

1. Evaluation (strategical & tactical)
2. Plan (ours and our opponent's)
3. Execution (calculation & move)

That's the right order, although many trainers/authors do not really follow it — they prefer to teach first to move and then to think. With this way they have some success but they will never have a GM or a player near such strength.

Chess is a mind game — it asks you to think to find solutions, even if these solutions are more or less obvious.

In every position you must know where you are (evaluation), where you want to go (plan) and how you will go there (execution). So simple, but we tend to forget this procedure in the heat of the battle.

Nowadays, chess games between decent players are full of small plans of different types and ideas, based on purely strategic and tactical motives. The one who will eva-luate, plan and execute better than the oppo-nent earns the first option to win the game.

A closer examination of games played between strong players will prove that there is some harmony among their moves, some central idea that guides the movements of their forces. This is what we call a plan. A good chess player refuses to act without any plan, even if this plan sometimes turns out to be mistaken in the long run.

First of all, it is important to identify the most important strategic and tactical elements of each particular position. According to the needs of that certain position, we should create our plan and stick to it. Games where only one plan is used are rarely seen these days. We are usually obliged to create several small plans, which of course are just parts of our main goal: winning!

Many weak players are not able to construct an acceptable plan. This has nothing to do with intelligence, but just with basic chess education. Nowadays, with so many books, electronic help and trainers available, anything can be learned and, by constant practice, it can be understood and assimilated. Without basic chess education and knowledge we can't go very far. So, the first step is to understand the basic strategic and tactical elements that govern our game.

Plans are necessary and can be found in every phase of a chess game. From the early opening till the late endgame, chess players create the necessary plans, derived from such varied factors as the occupation of an important square to an aggressive attack.

More common are the plans we draw right after the end of the opening phase, but this is of course not

the rule. Nowadays, with the opening theory having gone very far, the choice of a certain opening very much depends on a plan we would like to use!

Some general advice could be presented to the reader as follows:

SOS Tip 2 — Planning

1. Notice and understand the main merits and disadvantages of each side.
2. Notice the immediate threats of both sides, but especially of your opponent!
3. Determine what is (are) the main, most significant target(s) and how the plan should be executed.
4. Examine what will be the opponent's reaction to your plan.
5. Examine what your opponent's possible main plan is (can be) and how you should react to it.
6. If you can choose among two or more good plans, opt for the one that you think can bring most benefits.
7. Follow your plan. Do not change it without a really good reason.

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CHAPTER 1.
PAWN ENDINGS

PAWN POWER

Pawn endings are fundamental to the education of an aspiring chess player.

The reason is obvious: no matter which other type of ending we encounter, there will always be moments when the possibility of a transition (through exchanges) to a pawn ending will force us to properly evaluate its positive or negative properties and accordingly make our decision.

Many games never reach the endgame. However, every good chess player, even in the heat of the battle, must consider the endings that can possibly arise in the course of the game.

Our opening moves must take into account the consequences they may impose on a future ending.

Doubled, isolated, immobilised or passed pawns, strong and weak squares (in general, all the positional elements, positive or negative), must be considered and evaluated.

Anticipation of a favourable ending or fear of an inferior one will often influence our decisions in the middlegame, in the sense of selecting or rejecting certain continuations.

When dissatisfied with a prospective ending we will often opt for unclear complications or serious material or positional concessions. In the end, our evaluation of the endings that may arise will affect the entire course of the battle.

In comparison with other types of endings, very few games actually reach a pawn ending. Based on this fact, many chess players tend to underestimate its rich content and significance.

It would be wrong to assume that perfect knowledge of its technical side is easy to master and that, consequently, its study is ‘unimportant’.

The pawn ending lurks behind every position and its proper knowledge and evaluation can prove very useful to our decision-making process.

Pawn endings have their own specifics, which set them apart from other types of endings. Their main characteristic is the significant role of the king, which transforms himself from a subject of protection by the other pieces to the most useful piece in combat.

As a rule, the active participation of the king in the proceedings decides the outcome of a pawn ending. Also, the worth of pawns is greatly increased, thanks to their unique ability to promote to any other piece.

Consequently, the basic aim in a pawn ending is to create a passed pawn and promote it.

The ‘transformation’ of the pawn can be considered as an original way of gaining material! Such a

drastic change in the material balance between the opponents is usually sufficient to cease further resistance.

The threat of promotion, or even that of creating a passed pawn, is a powerful weapon in itself.

In pawn endings the king is the main motivating power, guiding and coordinating the advance of the pawns. As a rule, the king heads for the centre, from where, as the position dictates, he can be directed to either flank, usually to attack enemy pawns.

The king also executes complex manoeuvres, aiming to occupy or defend critical squares, or to force the opponent to move himself, i.e. to create a zugzwang position.

Behind the 'simplicity veil' that covers pawn endings, quite often one can discover true gems and fantastic opportunities!

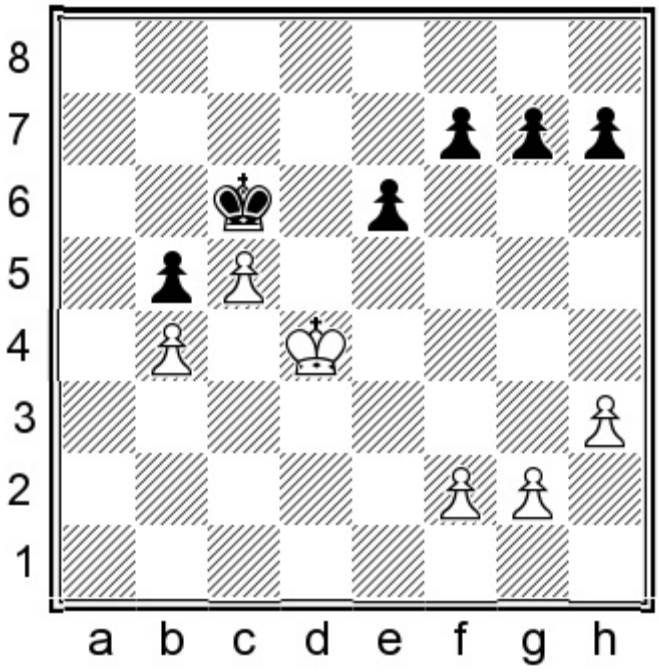
The main elements of pawn endings education can be classified as follows:

SOS Tip 1 — Pawn Endings Elements

1. Opposition: Close Opposition — Distant Opposition — Knight Opposition.
2. Rules: Promotion Square — Promotion Count — Advance of Separated Passed Pawns.
3. Squares: Critical Squares — Corresponding Squares.
4. Technique: Triangulation — Breakthrough — Passed Pawn — Outside Passed Pawn — Protected Passed Pawn.

EXERCISE 1
Kanmazalp Ogulcan
Darini Pouria
B22 Ankara 2011

35...♔c6



EVALUATION

This endgame looks like a draw to me, as there is hardly any entrance for my king on the kingside, so there is little hope to benefit from the protected passed c-pawn... As in similar cases the protected passed pawn is 'operating' as a decoy (it hardly queens!) and I am obliged to find the desired and accurate breakthrough on the kingside.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Obviously I must create weaknesses on the kingside and then penetrate with my king to attack them. Black cannot defend them, as my passed & protected c-pawn deprives him. I feel that in general I should leave my h-pawn on h3, allowing my king to enter the h-file in an appropriate moment (after some pawns exchanges) and attack the black h-pawn. So, good seems to be **36.f4 f6 37.g4 ♔c7 38.g5** and so on.

PLAN B

As in Plan C, I think that good is **36.g4 f6**, but now I should go for **37.h4 ♔d7 38.g5**, when I should prevail, as my king would be able to attack the kingside opponent pawns, 'helped' by the c5-pawn.

PLAN C

With the use of the g-pawn I will create the desired breakthrough and potential entrance for my king. So, I should start with **36.g4 f6** (**36...♔d7**, loses to **37.g5 ♔c6 38.♔e5 ♔d7 39.h4 ♔e7 40.h5 ♔d7 41.f3**) and now I should go directly for **37.g5**, when I should be on the right track.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 1

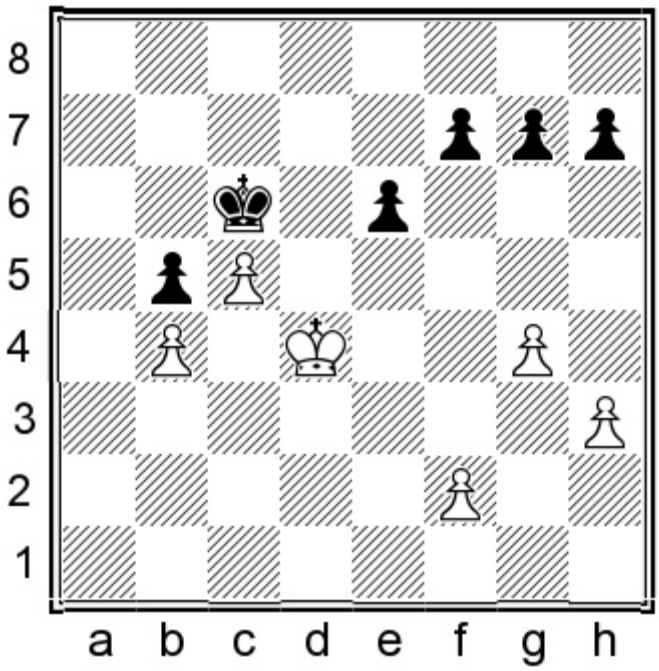
Plan A is wrong, as Black will easily get (in the future) a passed e-pawn and draw.

Plan B is best — see the game.

Plan C is wrong, as the pawn on h4 deprives the white king from his entrance.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
0	**50**	**0**

36.g4!



36...f6

The alternative waiting strategy with 36...♔d7 loses to 37.g5 ♔c6 38.♔e5 ♔d7 39.h4 ♔e7 40.h5 ♔d7 41.f3! (creating a zugzwang. Wrong would be 41.h6? gxh6 42.gxh6 ♔e7 43.c6 f6+ 44.♔d4 ♔d6 45.c7 e5+ 46.♔e4 ♔xc7=) 41...♔e7 42.c6 h6 (42...f6+ 43.♔d4 ♔d6 44.h6+–) 43.gxh6 gxh6 44.c7 f6+ 45.♔d4 ♔d7 46.♔c5 ♔xc7 47.♔xb5 ♔d6 48.♔b6! (48.♔c4? e5 49.b5 f5=) 48...e5 49.b5 f5 50.♔a7+–.

37.g5!

Only by this! 37.h4? ♔d7 38.g5 h5 39.gxh6 gxh6 40.♔e4 h5, would only lead to a draw, as White would have lost his entrance point on h4.

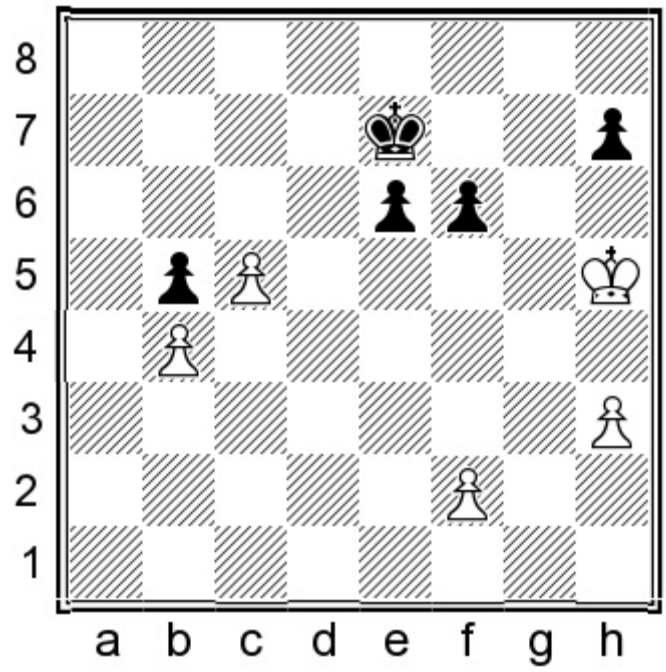
37...♔d7

37...fxg5, should have been tried, as it requires accuracy by White: 38.♔e5 ♔d7 39.f3 (39.c6+ wins as well: 39...♔xc6 [39...♔c7 40.♔xe6 ♔xc6 41.f3! h6 42.♔e5! {42.♔f7? ♔d6 {42...♔d5 43.♔xg7 ♔c4 44.♔xh6 ♔xb4 45.♔xg5 ♔c4 46.h4 b4 47.h5 b3 48.h6 b2 49.h7 b1=♕ 50.h8=♕ ♕g1+=} 43.♔xg7 ♔e6 44.♔xh6 ♔f6=} 42...♔b6 43.♔d5 g6 44.♔d6 ♔b7 45.♔c5 ♔a6 46.♔c6 h5 47.♔c5+–] 40.♔xe6 h6 41.f3) 39...h6 (39...♔e7 40.c6 h6 41.c7 ♔d7 42.c8=♕+ ♔xc8 43.♔xe6 ♔c7 44.♔d5! [44.♔f7? ♔d7 45.♔xg7 ♔e6 46.♔xh6 ♔f6=] 44...♔b6 45.♔d6 ♔b7 46.♔c5 ♔a6 47.♔c6+–) 40.c6+ ♔c7 41.♔xe6 ♔xc6 42.♔e5!+–, as above.

38.gxf6 gxf6 39.♔e4

Now, as the white h-pawn is still behind (39.h4? h5!=) the white king can attack the black h-pawn via the h-file.

39...♔c6 40.♔f4 ♔d7 41.♔g4 ♔e7 42.♔h5



42...e5

Black should do something active, as the passive 42...♔f7 43.♔h6 ♔g8 44.c6, loses quickly. But any pawn movement weakens his position further...

43.♔h6?

Inaccurate. White should retreat with 43.♔g4! ♔e6 44.h4 e4 (44...h6 45.♔h5 f5 46.♔xh6 e4 47.♔g5 ♔e5 48.h5 f4 49.h6 e3 50.fxe3 fxe3 51.h7 e2 52.h8=♕++–) 45.♔f4 f5 46.h5 ♔f6 47.c6 ♔e6 48.h6+–. Now he will have to enter a (won) queen ending.

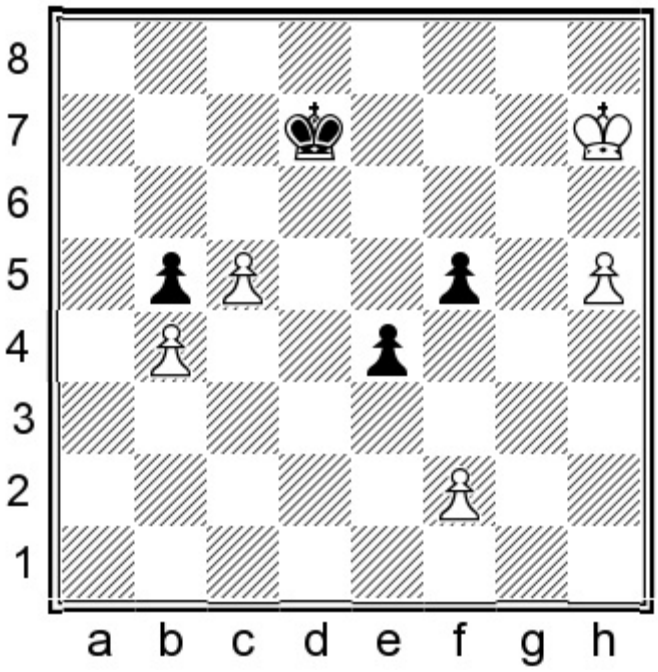
43...e4! 44.h4 ♔e6

Or 44...f5 45.♔g5 ♔e6 46.♔f4+–.

45.h5 ♔d7?!

Black could create some (minor) 'problems' to White with 45...♔d5 46.♔xh7 f5 47.h6 f4, as now 48.♔g7!, should be played: (48.♔g8? e3 49.fxe3 fxe3 50.h7 e2 51.h8=♕ e1=♕ 52.♕h5+ ♔c6 [52...♔c4? 53.♕g4+ ♔c3 54.♕d7 ♔xb4 55.c6+–] 53.♕g6+ ♔c7 54.♕b6+ ♔c8 55.♕c6+ [55.♕xb5? ♕e6+=] 55...♔d8±) 48...e3 49.fxe3 fxe3 50.h7 e2 51.h8=♕ e1=♕ 52.♕d8+ ♔c6 (52...♔c4 53.c6+–) 53.♔f7! ♕c1 (53...♕xb4 54.♕d6+ ♔b7 55.c6++–, is the typical trick that always saves the white b-pawn) 54.♔e8! and White triumphs.

46.♔xh7 f5



47.♔g6!

47.♔g7?, limits White's check's from the 7th and 8th ranks (which White clears with his text move): 47...f4 48.h6 e3 49.fxe3 fxe3 50.h7 e2 51.h8=♕ e1=♕ 52.♕h3+ ♔c7±.

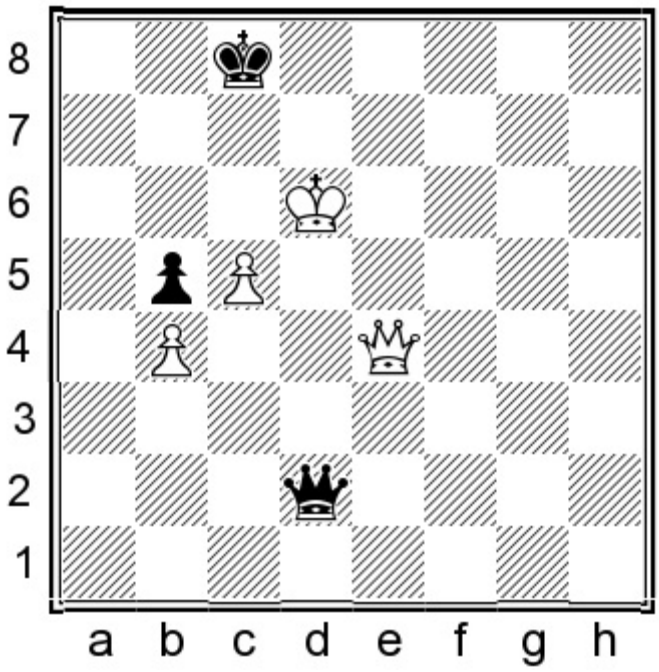
47...f4 48.h6 e3 49.fxe3 fxe3 50.h7 e2 51.h8=♕ e1=♕ 52.♕g7+ ♔c8 53.♕g8+ ♔c7 54.♕f7+ ♔b8 55.♕f4+ ♔b7 56.♔f5!

It is time for the white king to assist — he will be either creating mating threats or simply capture the black b-pawn. Black must also watch out for a queen exchange — all these are too much for Black to handle with.

56...♔c8

Or 56...♕d1 57.♕e4+ ♔b8 58.♔e6+–.

57.♕e4 ♕f2+ 58.♔e6 ♕a2+ 59.♔d6 ♕d2+



60.♕d5

60.♔c6 ♕d7+ 61.♔b6+–, is easy as well.

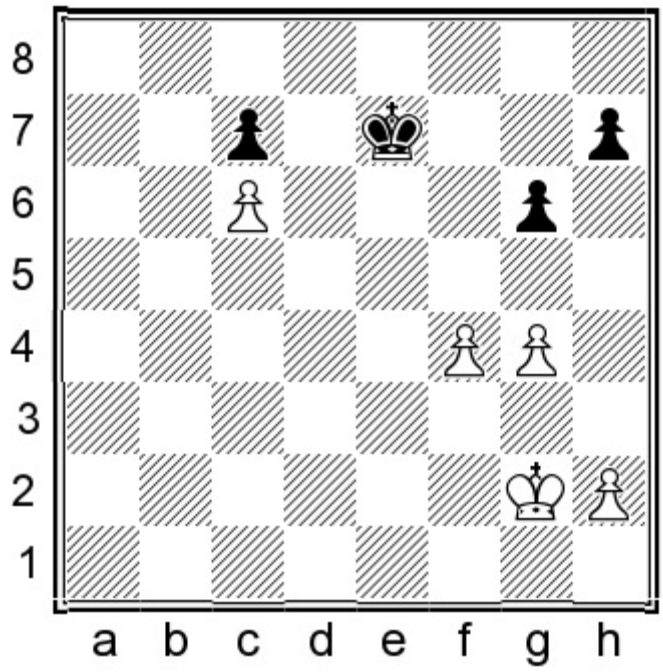
60...♕xb4?

Makes it easier, but there was no chance either after 60...♕f4+ 61.♔c6+–.

61.♕a8# 1–0

EXERCISE 2
Shirov Alexei
Timman Jan
C80 Wijk aan Zee 1996

48...♔xe7



EVALUATION

As according to my calculations this ending is lost for my opponent and I just have to play the final touch, which I have prepared long ago. It is true that I will lose my c6-pawn, but this will not affect the outcome of the game, as my kingside pawns are pretty quick.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I have prepared the obvious **49.g5** and I should of course go for it. After **49...♔d6 50.h4 ♔xc6 51.f5 ♔d6** (**51...gxf5 52.h5 ♔d6 53.g6 hxg6 54.h6+–**), I can play **52.f6**. This is considered to be won for me due to my passed and protected f-pawn. My king will then travel to the queenside to collect the black c-pawn and the rest should be easy, as to pawn endings principles.

PLAN B

I think that I cannot win with **49.g5**, which is not good and instead I would have to go for the 'quick race' by **49.h4 ♔d6 50.f5** (**50...♔xc6 51.fxg6 hxg6 52.h5+–**) **50...gxf5 51.g5**, when this should be the end of the game.

PLAN C

As in Plan B, I think that **49.g5**, can't win but I can win by playing the natural **49.♔f3 ♔d6 50.♔e4 ♔xc6 51.♔e5 ♔d7 52.♔f6 c6 53.h3 c5 54.♔e5 ♔c6 55.h4 c4 56.♔d4**, when I do not see a defence for my opponent.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 2

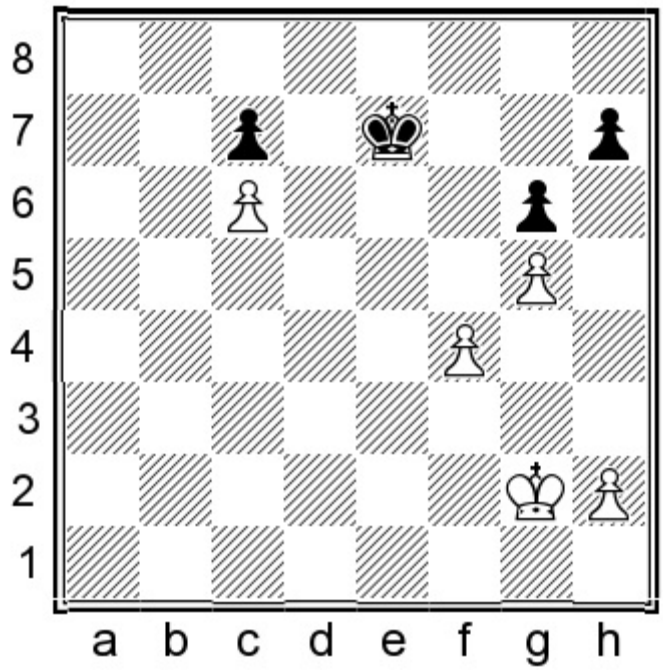
Plan A is best, but still White can't win — see the game.

Plan B is not winning as well, but it is easier to be faced — see the analysis.

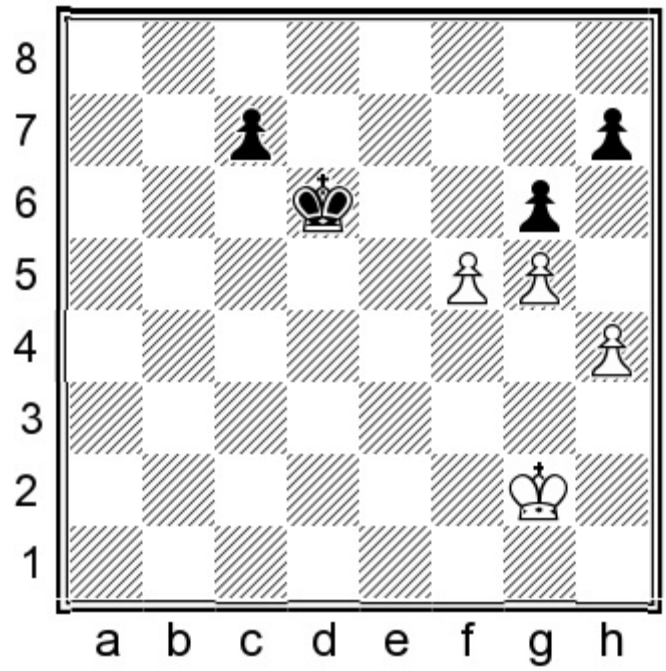
Plan C is not winning as well, but it is easier to be faced — see the analysis.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**35**	**35**

49.g5



And here Black resigned, as it seems that when Black collects the white c-pawn, White stages a decisive breakthrough on the kingside. But this is not exactly the case: 49...♔d6 50.h4 (the direct 50.f5 is easier: 50...gxf5 [50...♔xc6? 51.f6 ♔d6 52.♔f3 ♔e6 53.♔e4 ♔d6 54.♔d4 ♔e6 55.♔c5 ♔d7 56.♔d5 ♔e8 57.♔c6 ♔d8 and now the white h-pawn decides: 58.h3+–] 51.h4 ♔e5 52.♔f3 f4 53.h5 ♔f5 54.g6 hxg6 55.h6 ♔f6 56.♔xf4 g5+!=) 50...♔xc6 51.f5 ♔d6! (51...gxf5? 52.h5 ♔d6 53.g6 hxg6 54.h6+–)



52.f6. This was considered to be won for White due to his passed and protected f-pawn. But this position is won only without the h-pawns, as then White will exchange his f- for Black's c-pawn and then win the black g-pawn, achieving a well-known won ending as his last pawn is on the 4th rank.

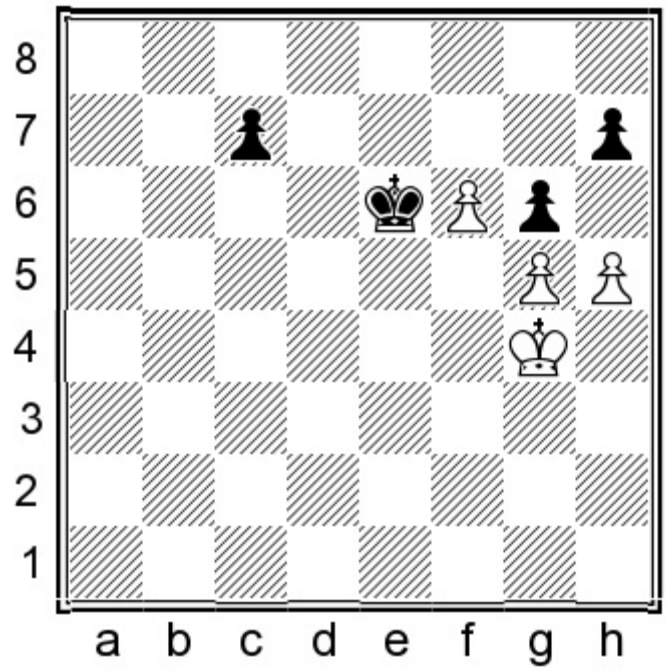
The three critical ideas are:

1. When White pushes his h-pawn to h5, Black should put his king to f7 to recapture on g6 with his king.

2. When White goes with his king to c6 Black must be ready to play his king to d8 and give the move to White. This creates a mutual zugzwang.

3. Black should in general not push his c-pawn.

Game can continue by 52...♔e6 (52...♔d7 is good as well: 53.♔f3 ♔e6 54.♔f4 ♔f7 55.♔e5 ♔e8 56.♔d5 ♔d7 57.♔c5 ♔e8=, but not 52...c5? 53.♔f3 ♔e6 54.♔e4 ♔d6 55.♔d3 ♔e6 56.♔c4 ♔d6 57.♔b5+–), and now 53.♔f3 (53.♔g3!? ♔f7! [53...♔d6? 54.h5! ♔e6 {54...gxh5 55.♔h4 c5 56.g6!! hxg6 57.♔g5 c4 58.♔xg6 c3 59.f7 c2 60.f8=♕++–} 55.hxg6 hxg6+–] 54.♔g4 ♔e6 55.h5 ♔f7=) 53...♔d6 (53...♔f7=) 54.♔g4 (54.♔e4 ♔e6 55.♔d4 ♔d7 [55...♔d6 56.♔c4 ♔e6=, but not 56...c6? 57.♔d4 ♔e6 58.♔e4! {58.♔c5 ♔d7=} 58...c5 59.♔d3+–] 56.♔d5 ♔e8! [56...♔d8? 57.♔c6+– zugzwang] 57.♔e6 [57.♔c6 ♔d8] 57...♔f8! 58.♔e5 [58.♔d7? c5–+] 58...♔e8=) 54...♔e6 55.h5



And now Black should be very careful:

b1) 55...♔d6? 56.hxg6 hxg6 57.♔f4 ♔e6 58.♔e4 ♔d6 59.♔d4 c6 60.♔c4 ♔e6 61.♔c5 ♔d7 62.f7 — as mentioned above without the h-pawns this wins — 62...♔e7 63.♔xc6 ♔xf7 64.♔d7 ♔g7 65.♔e7 ♔h7 66.♔f6 ♔h8 67.♔xg6 ♔g8 68.♔f6 (68.♔h6+–) 68...♔f8 69.g6 ♔g8 70.g7 ♔h7 71.♔f7+–.

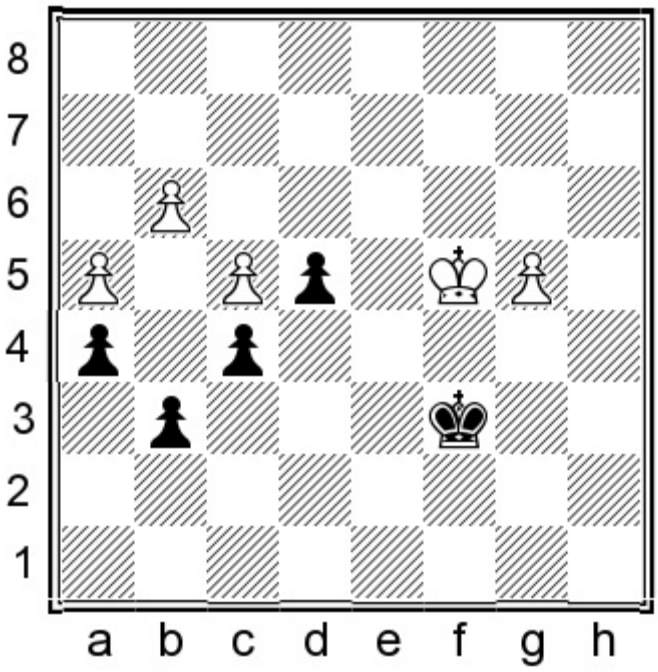
b2) 55...gxh5+? 56.♔xh5 c5 57.♔h6! (57.♔g4? c4 [57...h6? 58.♔h5! hxg5 59.♔g6+–] 58.♔f4 c3 59.♔e3 h6=) 57...c4 58.♔xh7 (58.♔g7 c3 59.f7 c2 60.f8=♕ c1=♕ 61.♕f6+ ♔d5 62.♔xh7 ♕c7+ 63.♔g8 ♕c8+ 64.♔g7 ♔c4 65.♕f3! ♔b5 66.g6 ♔a4 67.♕e3+–) 58...c3 59.♔g6 c2 60.f7 c1=♕ 61.f8=♕+–.

b3) 55...♔f7! 56.h6 (56.hxg6+ ♔xg6!=; 56.♔h4 c5! 57.hxg6+ ♔xg6 58.♔g4 h6=) 56...♔e6 57.♔f4 ♔f7 58.♔e5 ♔f8 59.♔e6 ♔e8 60.♔d5 ♔d7 (60...♔f7 61.♔c6 ♔f8 62.♔xc7 ♔f7 63.♔d7 ♔f8 64.♔e6 ♔e8 65.f7+ ♔f8=) 61.♔c5 ♔e8 62.♔c6 ♔d8 63.f7 ♔e7 64.♔xc7 ♔xf7 65.♔d7 ♔f8 66.♔d8 ♔f7 67.♔d7 ♔f8 68.♔e6 ♔e8 69.♔f6 ♔f8=.

1–0

EXERCISE 3
Potkin Vladimir
Grischuk Alexander
E73 Khanty-Mansiysk 2011

47.♔c4



EVALUATION

My passed and protected e-pawn is obviously more valuable than my opponent's passed but not protected b-pawn. My plan is to get a winning 3 vs 3 pawn ending on the kingside by a well-timed trading of the other pawns, so I must opt for exchanging my well-protected e-pawn for White's weak b-pawn. But how to do it? Obviously I must get the opposition after the exchanges — opposition exists when all corners of the rectangle around the kings have the same colour and the side not to move has the opposition.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I should work on the triangulation method and this is best done by **47...♔c7 48.♔c3** (**48.b5 ♔b6 49.♔b4 e3 50.♔c3 ♔xb5 51.♔d3 ♔b4 52.♔xe3 ♔c3–+** — opposition) **48...♔b6 49.♔c4 ♔c6 50.♔d4** (**50.b5+ ♔b6 51.♔b4 e3–+**) **50...♔b5 51.♔c3 e3 52.♔d3 ♔xb4 53.♔xe3 ♔c3–+** — opposition.

PLAN B

I should work on the triangulation method again, but I think that this is best done by **47...♔b7 48.♔c3** (**48.b5 ♔b6 49.♔b4 e3 50.♔c3 ♔xb5 51.♔d3 ♔b4 52.♔xe3 ♔c3–+** — opposition) **48...♔b6 49.♔c4 ♔c6 50.♔d4** (**50.b5+ ♔b6 51.♔b4 e3–+**) **50...♔b5 51.♔c3 e3 52.♔d3 ♔xb4 53.♔xe3 ♔c3–+** — opposition.

PLAN C

Good is **47...♔b6 48.♔b3 ♔b5 49.♔c3 e3 50.♔d3 ♔xb4 51.♔xe3 ♔c3**, when I am easily winning.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 3

Plan A is best — the analysis is correct.

Plan B is equal to Plan A — the analysis is correct.

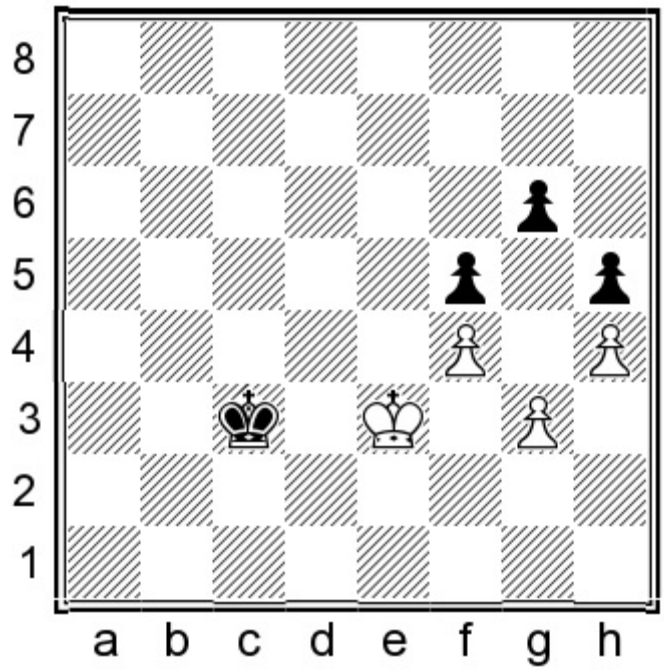
Plan C is simply bad and spoils the win — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**50**	**0**

47...♔b6? 48.♔b3?

Too passive. The active 48.b5!, saves the day: 48...♔c7 (48...♔a5 49.♔c5 e3 50.b6 e2 51.b7 e1=♕ 52.b8=♕=) 49.♔d4 ♔b7 50.♔c3! ♔b6 51.♔c4 e3 52.♔d3 ♔xb5 53.♔xe3 ♔c4 54.♔e2=, with diagonal opposition.

48...♔b5 49.♔c3 e3 50.♔d3 ♔xb4 51.♔xe3 ♔c3!



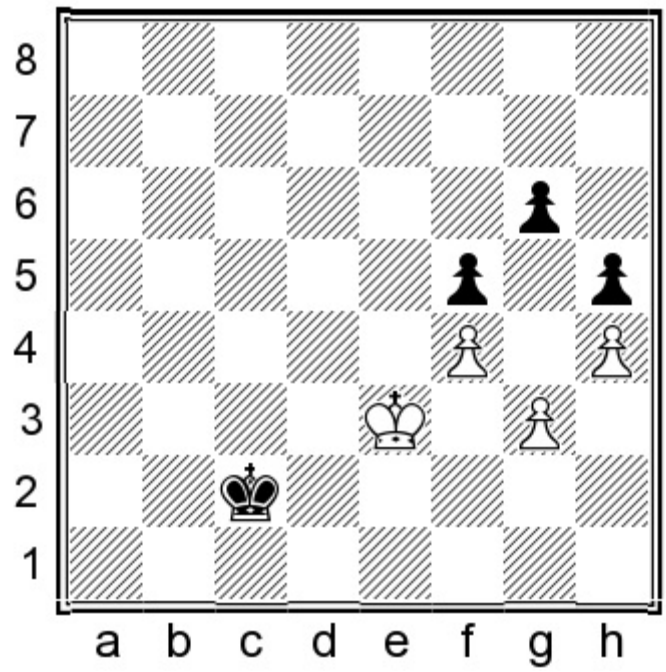
Now the opposition decides. The key squares are e1, e2, e3 and f3 and Black is gonna get them!

52.♔e2 ♔c2

Opposition on the main line, which goes through the middle of the 3 key squares e1, e2 and e3. 52...♔c4?, blows it as the opposition after 53.♔d2 ♔d4, is not enough (e3 and f3 are only two adjacent key squares and so opposition does not work in this direction) as it can not be improved to the opposition in the direction left to right: 54.♔e2 ♔e4 55.♔f2 ♔d3 56.♔f3!= and White has the all important oppositions.

53.♔e3

53.♔e1 ♔d3–+.



53...♔d1!

The typical way to exploit the opposition.

54.♔f2

The counterattack 54.♔d4 ♔e2 55.♔e5 ♔f3 56.♔f6 ♔xg3 57.♔xg6, runs into 57...♔g4!–+.

54...♔d2 55.♔f3

55.♔f1 ♔e3–+.

55...♔e1 56.♔e3

Or 56.♔g2 ♔e2 57.♔g1 ♔f3 58.♔h2 ♔f2 59.♔h3 ♔g1 60.g4 hxg4+ 61.♔g3 ♔f1 62.♔h2 ♔f2–+.

56...♔f1 57.♔f3 ♔g1

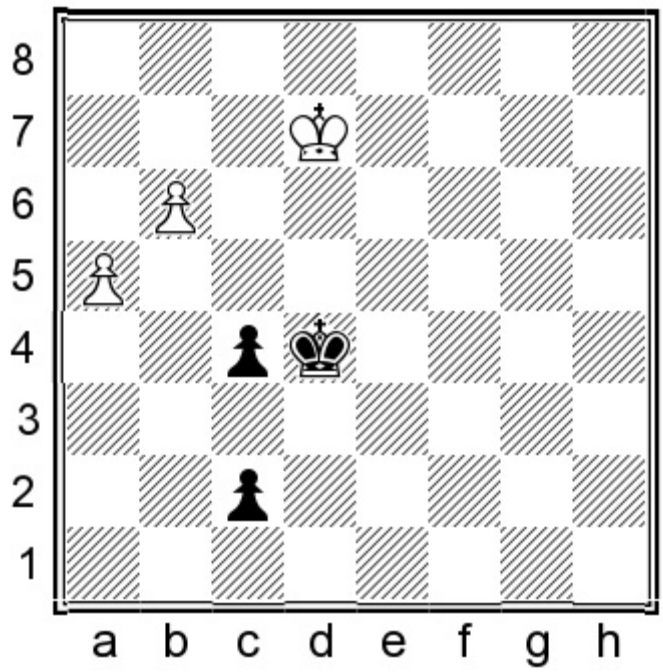
And White resigned due to 58.♔e3 ♔g2.

0–1

EXERCISE 4

Kasparov Garry
Bacrot Etienne
C88 Moscow 2004

64.♔e2



EVALUATION

My opponent has a protected passed pawn, but my compensation lays in the form of my active king and the possibility of the ...f4 advance at the right moment, with the help of which I will solve all my problems and achieve the draw. So, I have to be accurate in doing so.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Before I proceed in pushing ...f4, I should have placed my king on h5, to avoid a potential g4 respond. So, I will opt for **64...♔f6** and after **65.♔e3 ♔g6 66.♔d4 ♔h5**, I would be ready for the draw.

PLAN B

My king should remain active, as in nearly every endgame and this is best done by **64...♔e4 65.♔f2 ♔d4 66.♔f3 ♔e5 67.♔e3** and now **67...f4+ 68.gxf4+ ♔f6 69.h5 ♔g7 70.♔e4 ♔h6**, with a draw.

PLAN C

Here is no need to wait or to try to play smartly, as I can go directly for the thematic advance **64...f4 65.gxf4+ ♔xf4**, with a draw.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 4

Plan A is wrong and loses — see the game.

Plan B is drawing — the analysis is correct.

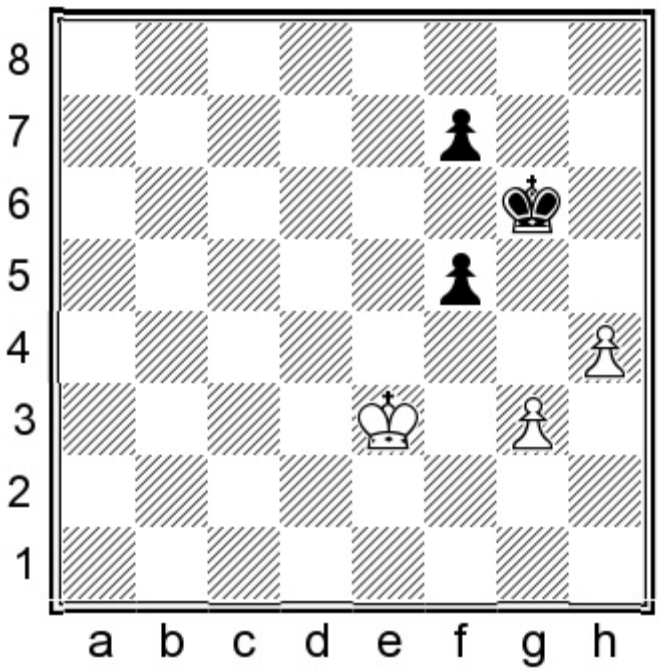
Plan C is simply bad and loses after **65.g4 ♔e4 66.h5**.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
0	**50**	**0**

64...♔f6?

A serious mistake. The black king should have remained active with 64...♔e4! 65.♔f2 ♔d4! 66.♔f3 ♔e5 67.♔e3 f4+! 68.gxf4+ ♔f6! 69.h5 ♔g7! 70.♔e4 ♔h6, with a draw.

64...♔f6? 65.♔e3! ♔g6



66.♔d4?

Returning the favour. The relatively simple 66.♔f3! ♔h5 (66...♔g7 67.♔f4 ♔f6 68.h5 ♔e6 69.♔g5!, or 66...f6 67.♔f4!) 67.♔f4 ♔g6 68.♔e5, would have won.

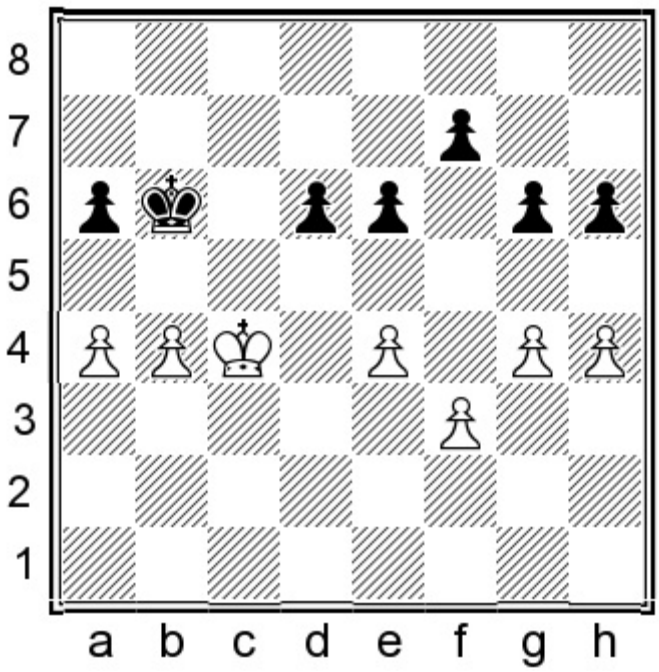
66...♔h5!

Now Black can draw after 67.♔d5 ♔g4 68.♔e5 f4!.

½-½

EXERCISE 5
Georgiadis Nico
Janik Igor
B77 Riga 2015

30...h6



EVALUATION

After a well-known opening variation of the 'Sicilian Defence — Dragon Variation', an interesting ending is on the cards. Both sides have played on principle: I believe that I can take advantage of my queenside pawn majority and my opponent thinks that he can hold the draw. Well, I feel that Black is more 'correct' on his thoughts, but there is a long way to go.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I feel that I should try to play on both sides, but it is better to start from the kingside, clarifying things on this wing. So, I can go for **31.f4 ♔c6 32.f5 g5 33.hxg5 hxg5 34.fxe6 fxe6** and only now **35.b5+ axb5+ 36.axb5+ ♔b6 37.♔b4 ♔b7 38.♔a5 ♔a7 39.b6+ ♔b7 40.♔b5 e5 41.♔a5**, when I am near to cash the point.

PLAN B

Getting a passed pawn, which will serve me as a ‘decoy’, seems to be a logical follow-up. After **31.b5 a5 32.f4 ♔b7 33.♔d4 ♔b6 34.f5 ♔b7 35.f6**, there is little that Black can do to avoid losing.

PLAN C

There is a long variation which seems to be quite ‘pleasant’ for me: **31.g5 hxg5 32.hxg5 ♔c6 33.b5+ axb5 34.axb5+ ♔b6 35.♔b4 d5 36.exd5 exd5 37.f4 d4 38.♔c4 ♔a5 39.♔xd4 ♔xb5 40.♔e5** and I will soon cash the point.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 5

Plan A contains correct analysis but it is only a draw — see the game. If you calculated it as a draw, then receive the 50 points.

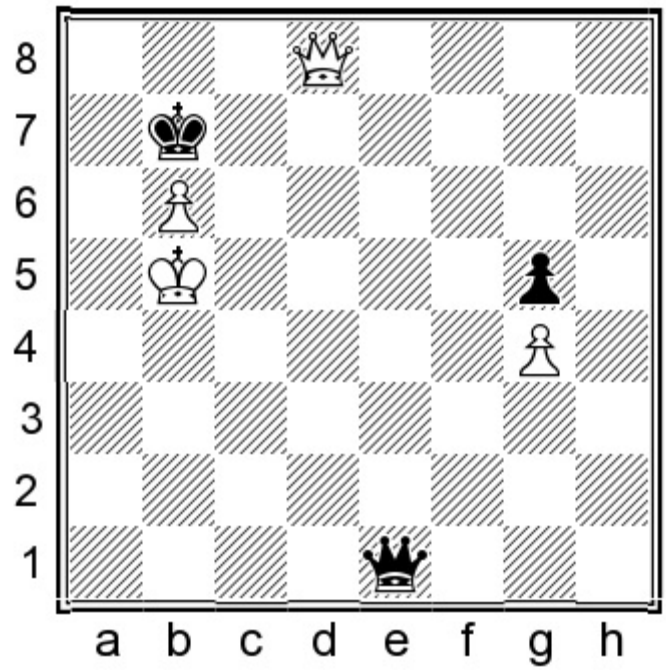
Plan B is false, as the analysis is wrong. After **31...axb5+!**, we will have a transposition to Plan A, which of course is a draw — see the analysis.

Plan C contains a flow, as it is just a draw after **38...d3! 39.♔xd3 ♔xb5 40.♔d4 ♔c6**. If you calculated this, then receive the 50 points.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**0**	**50**

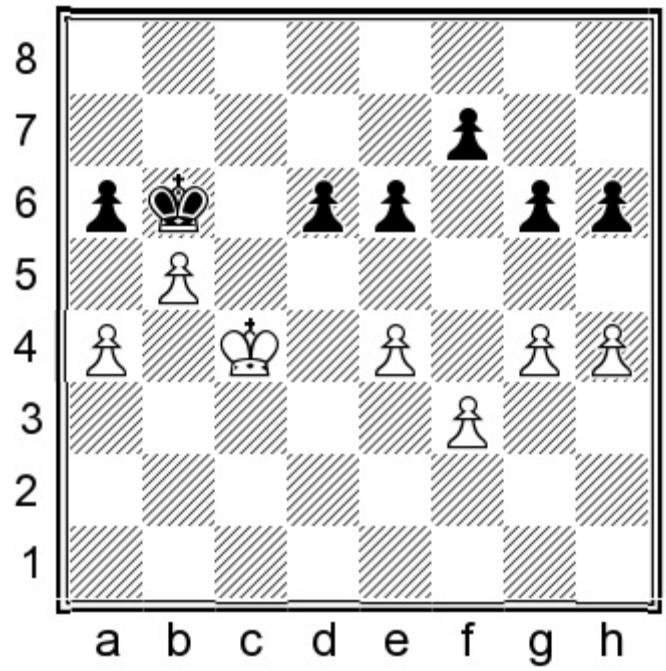
31.b5

31.f4 ♔c6 32.f5 g5 33.hxg5 hxg5 34.fxe6 fxe6 35.b5+ axb5+ 36.axb5+ ♔b6 37.♔b4 ♔b7 38.♔a5 ♔a7 39.b6+ ♔b7 40.♔b5 e5 41.♔a5, looks like a win for White, but Black has a surprising solution to his problems: 41...d5! 42.exd5 e4 43.d6 e3 44.d7 e2 45.d8=♕ e1=♕+ 46.♔b5



46...♕e8+! 47.♕xe8, stalemate! ½-½ Bukavshin,I-Belous,V Kirishi 2010.

31.b5

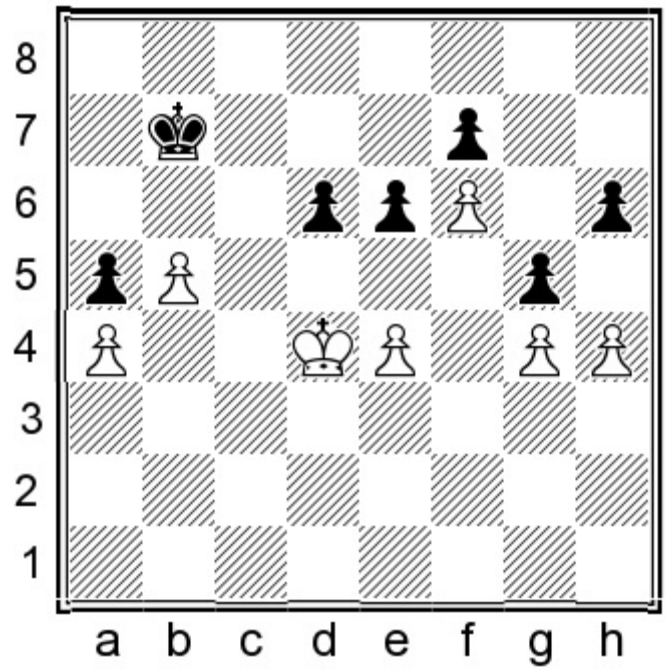


31...a5?

31...axb5+, transposes to the previous note.

32.f4 ♔b7 33.♔d4 ♔b6 34.f5 ♔b7 35.f6 g5

Black is also near to losing after 35...♔b6 36.g5 hxg5 37.hxg5 ♔b7 38.e5 d5 39.♔c5 ♔c7 40.b6+ ♔b7 41.♔d6 d4 42.♔e7 d3 43.♔xf7 d2 44.♔g8 d1=♕ 45.f7 ♕xa4 46.f8=♕ ♕c6 47.♔g7±, but he should have nevertheless tried it...



36.hxg5?

A blunder in a winning position.

By 36.h5! ♔b6 37.♔c4 ♔b7 38.e5! d5+ (38...dxe5 39.♔d3 ♔c7 40.♔e4 ♔d6 41.b6 ♔c6 42.♔xe5 ♔xb6 43.♔d6 e5 44.♔e7! e4 45.♔xf7 e3 46.♔g7 e2 47.f7 e1=♕ 48.f8=♕+–) 39.♔c5 ♔c7 40.b6+ ♔b7 41.♔d6 d4 42.♔e7 d3 43.♔xf7 d2 44.♔g7 d1=♕ 45.f7, he would win the queen ending.

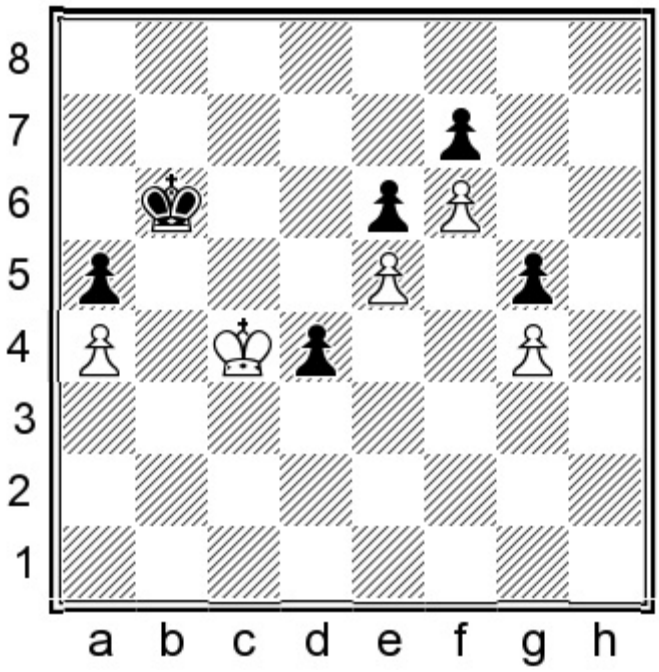
36...hxg5

Now it's a draw...

37.e5 d5 38.♔c5 ♔c7 39.b6+ ♔b7 40.♔b5

40.♔d6 d4 41.♔e7 d3 42.♔xf7 d2 43.♔g7 d1=♕ 44.f7 ♕xa4 45.f8=♕ ♕c6=.

40...d4! 41.♔c4 ♔xb6



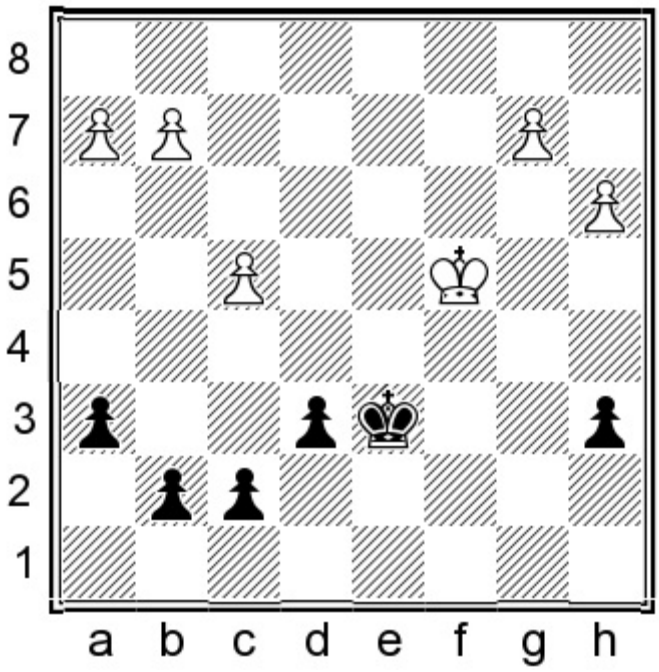
42.♔xd4

No way to do anything after 42...♔c6 43.♔c4 ♔b6.

½-½

EXERCISE 6
Tal Mihail
Djurasevic Bozidar
B66 Varna 1958

34.♔xc4



EVALUATION

Material equality has been retained, but it seems that I have a fatal disadvantage, stemming from the possibility for my opponent to create an outside passed pawn. Then, as I will have to deal with it, the opponent monarch will penetrate on my kingside, collecting my pawns.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I think that I can set a fortress, stopping the white king to get in my camp. This can be done by **34...♔c6 35.h4 ♔b6 36.b4 ♔c6 37.a4 ♔b6 38.b5 a5 39.♔d4 f6**, where I feel that I am OK.

PLAN B

My only surviving chance is to get creative on the kingside. For this I do not see anything better **34...g5 35.g3** (**35.fxg5 hxg5 36.h3 f5 37.g3 e5 38.♔d3 f4 39.gxf4** [**39.g4? ♔d5!–+**] **39...exf4**, with a draw) **35...gxf4 36.gxf4** and now **36...e5 37.fxe5+ ♔xe5**, with a draw.

PLAN C

No need to get panicked, as White cannot win anyway. But I should get ready to create my own passed pawn by **34...e5 35.fxe5+ ♔xe5 36.b4 ♔d6**, when there is little to be afraid of.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 6

Plan A is wrong. White can win after **40.h5 ♔c7 41.♔c5 ♔b7 42.♔d6**.

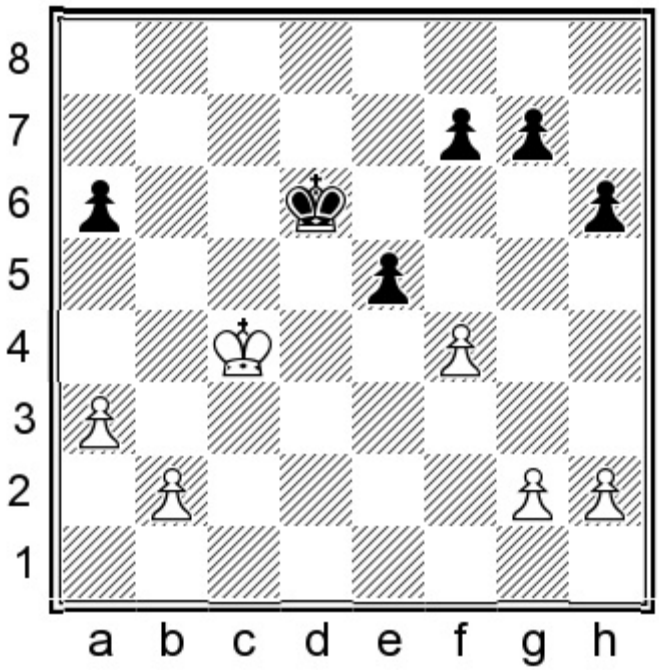
Plan B is correct — see the analysis.

Plan C is losing — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
0	**50**	**0**

34...e5?

A fatal mistake.



Correct was 34...g5! 35.g3 (35.fxg5 hxg5 36.h3 f5 37.g3 e5 38.♔d3 f4 39.gxf4 [39.g4? ♔d5!–+] 39...exf4, with a draw) 35...gxf4! 36.gxf4 and only now 36...e5! 37.fxe5+ ♔xe5, with a draw. Black failed to understand the difference.

34...e5? 35.fxe5+ ♔xe5 36.b4

The outside passed pawn decides the game. Black is unable to resist. 36.♔c5 g5 37.b4, would also do the job.

36...f5

After 36...♔d6, White wins by 37.g4! g6 38.a4 f5 39.gxf5 gxf5 40.♔d4.

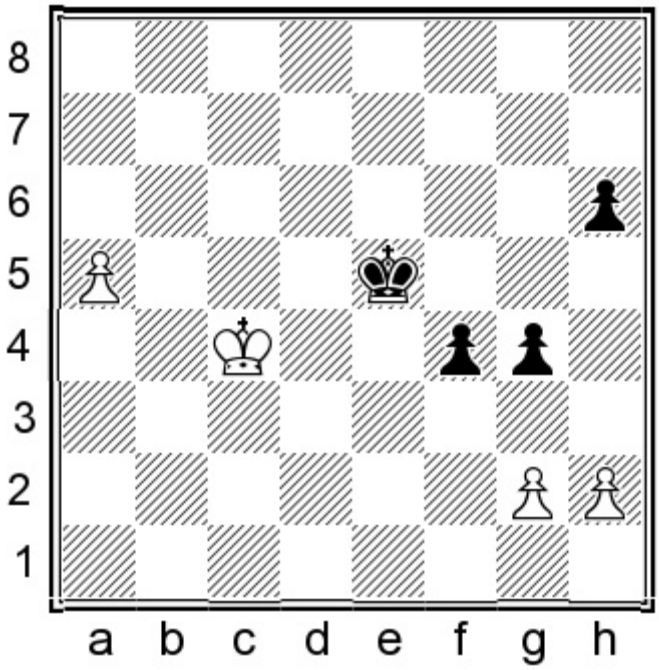
37.b5

Also winning is 37.♔c5 f4 38.a4 g5 39.b5 axb5 40.axb5 g4 41.b6 f3 42.gxf3 gxf3 43.b7 f2 44.b8=♕+.

37...axb5+ 38.♔xb5 f4 39.a4 g5 40.a5 g4

No salvation is offered by 40...♔d6 41.♔c4 ♔c6 42.♔d4 ♔b5 43.♔e4 ♔xa5 44.♔f5 ♔b4 45.h3! (45.♔g6? g4–+) 45...♔c3 46.♔g6 ♔d2 47.♔xh6 ♔e3 48.♔xg5.

41.♔c4



And Black resigned. After 41...♔e4, the white a-pawn promotes with check, while after 41...♔d6, the white king will attack the black kingside pawns, just as was described in the previous comment.

1–0

Show in Text Mode

CHAPTER 2.
MINOR PIECE ENDINGS

BISHOP POWER

The great Cuban FIDE World Champion Jose Raul Capablanca left us a rich heritage of chess ideas.

Moreover he 'taught' us how to take advantage from them and he proved in many ways on how being implemented in a resourceful way.

One of these ideas (theorems) will be examined here; his theorem on the single bishop endings: 'When you have one bishop left on the board, place your pawns on the opposite colour squares to your bishop'.

If you have only one bishop left, there is always the question as to where to put the pawns: on the colour of the bishop or not.

This is difficult to answer in general, but in pure same-coloured bishop endings J.R.Capablanca's advice to put the pawns on the opposite colour to complement the bishop and to restrict the enemy king usually comes in handy.

There are obviously exceptions to this, though. Each position really has to be judged independently.

Is an extra bishop in the endgame a good asset to bring victory? Well, usually the answer is yes, but extreme attention should be given on the following facts:

SOS Tip 1 — Bishop Endings Elements

1. There are enough pawns left.
2. If there are pawns only on one side and this side is the bad-corner-side of the bishop, many drawn positions can arise.
3. The kings' placement.
4. Implementation of the zugzwang method.

Generally bishop endings with pawns and with an extra healthy pawn should be a win for the stronger side.

In order the material advantage to be exploitable, other requirements must also be met, such as an active king, a well-placed bishop and a healthy pawn structure.

Naturally, the defender also has his chances, which cannot be disregarded.

Cases of 4:3 pawns on the same side are not rare and in general the weaker side succeeds to share the point. Things are far from easy, especially when additional pieces can play their role.

It is well-known that the side facing an isolated pawn tends to opt for the endgame, an action that will

highlight the weakness of the pawn.

There are various types of this ending, but one of the most interesting is the ending with plain same-coloured bishops.

These endings are hard to defend for the side with the isolated pawn. Three important points to be kept in mind:

SOS Tip 2 — Isolani Bishop Endings

1. The occupation of the weak square in front of the isolani. In this case the king is ready to penetrate into the opponent's camp.
2. The pawn structure. The 'Capablanca Theorem' of placing the pawns on squares of the opposite colour of our bishop is important. In the opposite case, when our opponent succeeds in blocking the pawns in squares of the same colour as of our bishop, the position becomes critical.
3. The zugzwang method, as in nearly all endgames, which will allow the stronger side to be successful.

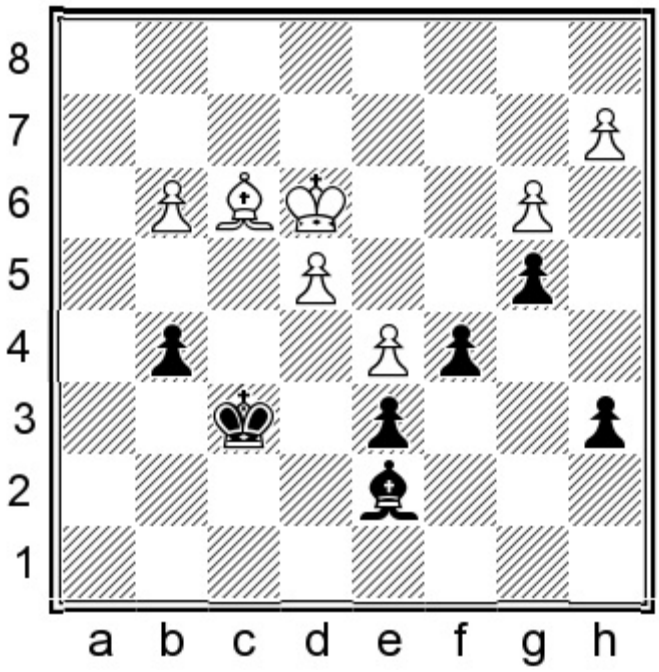
The case of a bishop (& pawn) vs a three pawns' phalanx is a very interesting one.

SOS Tip 3 — Pawn Phalanx

1. The defence of the side with the bishop consists on the immobilisation of the pawns, but this is hard to achieve when the pawns are far advanced.
2. The basic idea of the defence is to immobilise at least two pawns and prevent them from reaching their 7th rank.
3. In general, the defending king should be focused on the one side and the bishop on the other.
4. Combined defending forces can block the pawns.

EXERCISE 7
Grivas Efstratios
Bjerre Jonas Buhl
A37 Aarhus 2019

37.♔e3



EVALUATION

My opponent didn't handle the middlegame with precision, so he has got a lost bishop ending! His pawn structure is bad, as nearly all his pawns are placed on the colour of his bishop and my king has an excellent outpost on e5. Also my pawn majority (3:2) on the queenside will allow me sooner or later to create a passed pawn there. My position is more or less won.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Restriction of the opponent bishop is a welcomed feature, so I will opt for **37...g4 38.♗e2 a5**, followed by ...♔e5 and ...a4. This should give all the trumps I need to cash the point.

PLAN B

The natural way to go is to centralise my king and then push my queenside pawns to create a passed pawn. This is best done by **37...♔e5 38.♗e2 a5**, which would easily do the job. I will then go for ...a4 and ...a3, when White's resources would be limited...

PLAN C

My position is anyway won and nearly as I want. I can firstly activate my bishop by **37...♗b5 38.♗e2 ♔e5**, when I do not see what White can do.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 7

Plan A is against the basic bishop endgame rules of not placing the pawns in the colour of your bishop. The position is drawn after this mistaken plan.

Plan B is best — Black will win.

Plan C is not good, as White can defend, although not without some difficult moves — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
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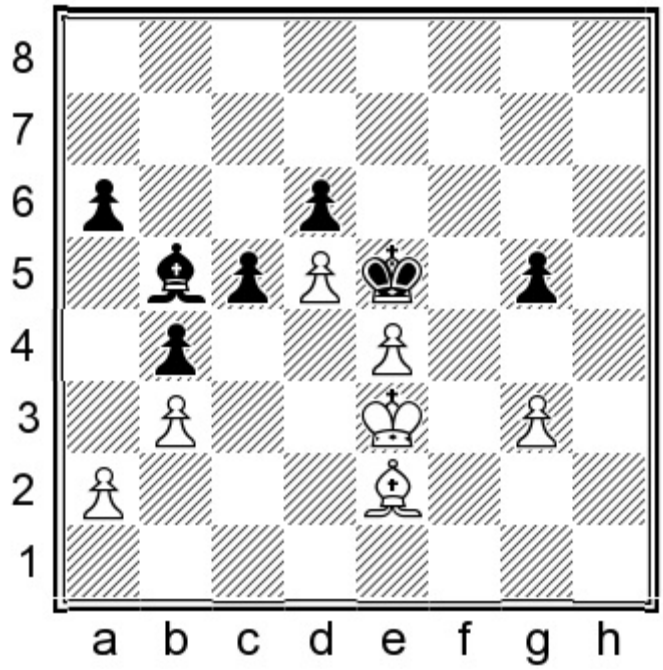
0	**50**	**0**

37...♗b5? 38.♗e2! ♔e5



39.♗d3!

Of course Black wins after 39.♗xb5? axb5 40.g4 c4.

39...g4

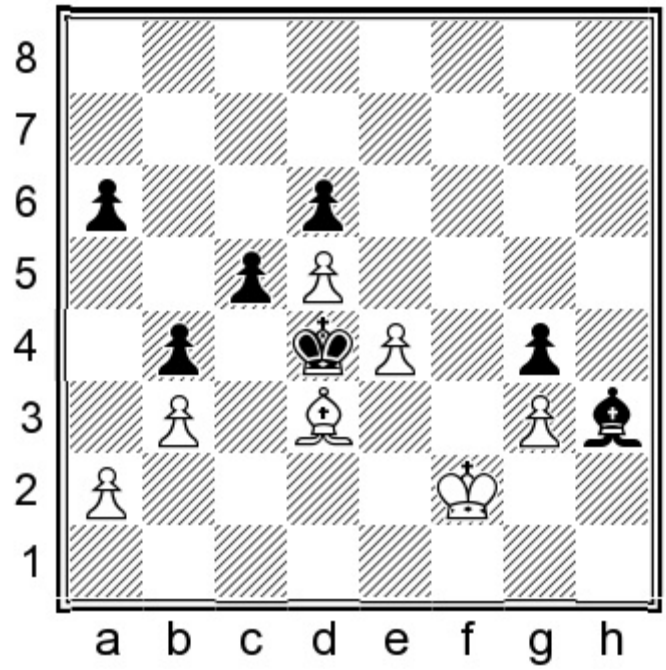
A last try, as 39...♗xd3 40.♔xd3 a5 41.♔e3, leads to a drawn pawn ending. Of course Black is not wishing to place his pawn in a light square (as the bishops) but he has fallen into zugzwang!

40.♗c2! ♗f1

Another try is 40...c4, where White has to act carefully: 41.♗d1! cxb3 42.axb3 ♗d7 43.♗e2 a5 44.♗d1=.

41.♗d3?!

This is still playable, but makes it very difficult; White relaxed too early! He could maintain an easier defensible position by 41.♔f2! ♗h3 (41...♗b5 42.♔e3=) 42.♗d3 ♔d4

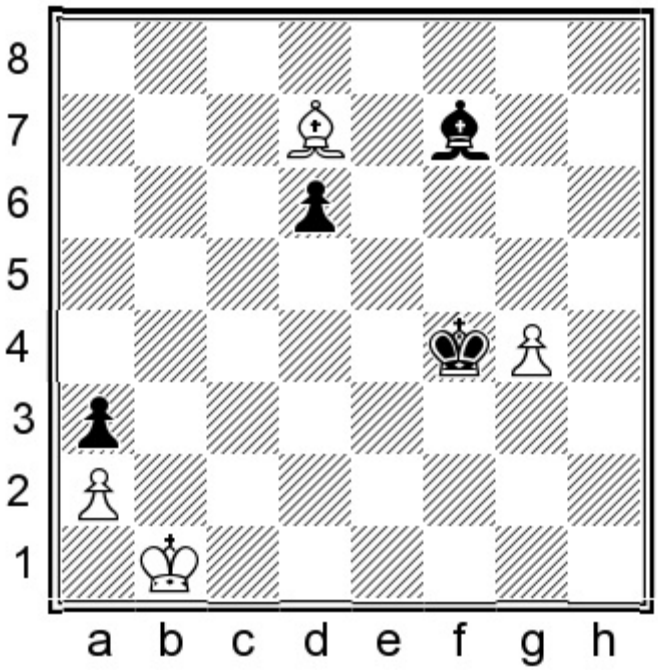


43.♔g1!, when we have a positional draw, as the black bishop is trapped and the black king should be concerned by the e5 advance, queening the white d-pawn. A sample line goes as 43...c4 (43...a5 44.♗c2 c4 45.♔f2 c3 46.♗b1=) 44.bxc4 a5 45.♔f2 ♔xd3 (45...♔c5 46.e5 dxe5 47.♗c2=) 46.e5 a4 47.e6! (47.exd6? b3 48.axb3 axb3 49.d7 b2 50.d8=♕ b1=♕–+) 47...b3 48.axb3 a3! (48...axb3? 49.e7 b2 50.e8=♕ b1=♕ 51.♕g6++–) 49.e7 a2 50.e8=♕ a1=♕ 51.♕e2+ ♔c3 52.c5! ♔xb3 53.♕b5+ ♔c3 54.cxd6=.

41...♗g2 42.♗c2 a5 43.♗d3 ♗f3

Here or later, Black should have gone for 43...c4!, when White would have to make a difficult choice:

a. The obvious 44.bxc4 a4 45.♗c2 a3! 46.♗a4 (46.♗b1 ♗f1–+) 46...♗xe4 47.♗d1, when it looks like a draw, but Black can create problems by the zugzwang method: 47...b3! (47...♗b1 48.♗b3) 48.♗xb3 ♗b1! 49.♔e2 ♔d4 50.♔d2 ♗e4 51.♗d1 ♔xc4 52.♗xg4 ♗xd5 53.♔c2 (53.♗f5 ♔b4 54.♗b1 ♗e6!–+) 53...♔d4 54.♔b1 ♔e3 55.♗f5 ♔f3 56.g4 ♔f4 (56...♗e4+? 57.♗xe4+ ♔xe4 58.♔c2=) 57.♗d7 ♗f7



And now White draws by 58.♗c6! (58.♗c8? d5–+) 58...♔xg4 59.♗b7 d5 60.♗xd5 ♗xd5 61.♔a1=.

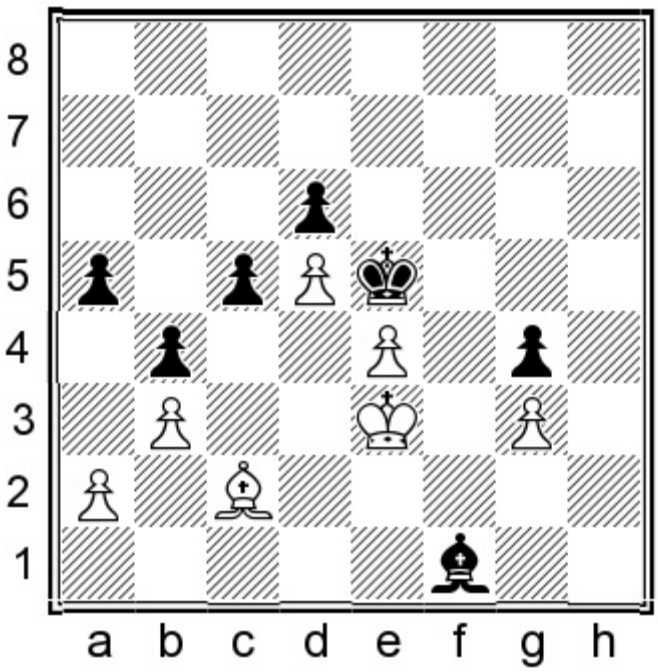
b. The other way is 44.♗xc4? ♗xe4 45.♗b5, when Black has to be precise: 45...♗f5! (45...♗b1 46.♔d2!, or 45...♗xd5? 46.♗d7 ♗f3 [46...♗e6 47.♗xe6! ♔xe6 48.♔e4 d5+ 49.♔f4=] 47.♗c8 d5 48.♗d7, when Black cannot make any real progress; his g4-pawn is always an obstacle) 46.♗e2 ♔xd5 47.♗b5 ♔e5, when he wins, as his bishop on f5 is perfectly placed.

44.♗c2 ♗h1 45.♗d3 ♗g2

45...c4!, again, should have created more problems. But Black had resigned himself to the draw...

46.♗c2 ♗f1?!

46...c4!.



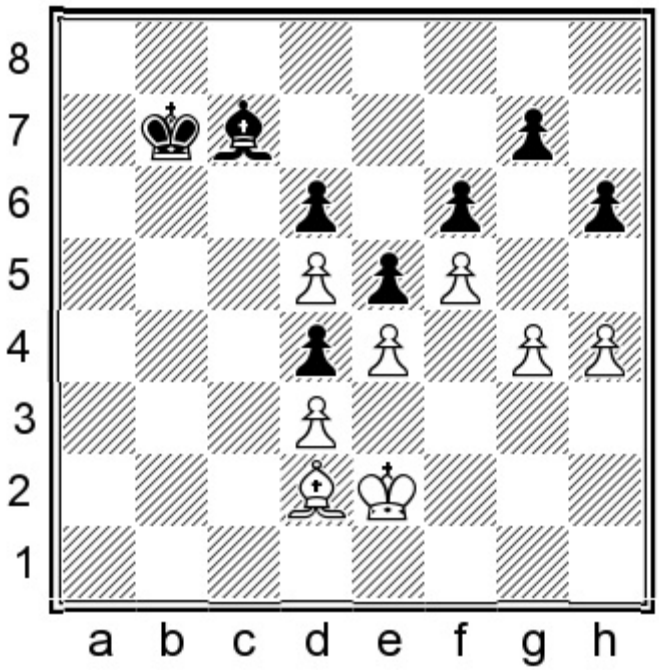
47.♗d3?!

47.♔f2! ♗b5 48.♔e3 c4 49.♗d1, was 'best'! Here White offered a draw and his opponent accepted, missing the above tries! A rather difficult ending, with many hidden resources.

½-½

EXERCISE 8
Karpov Anatoly
Ribli Zoltan
B52 Bath 1973

59...♔xb7



EVALUATION

My bishop's superiority over its black counterpart, in view of the pawn structure, is undeniable. But Black has only two weaknesses; the d6- and g7-pawns and the first is not really accessible to me. But since I also have the possibility of a breakthrough and penetration, my win comes naturally.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Of course the breakthrough with a timed g5, as well as the penetration of my king on the kingside should be the main winning factors. But I shouldn't be in hurry, firstly tightening down the black bishop by **60.♗b4**. Then I can for the breakthrough.

PLAN B

I have no time to wait, so I should go directly or the thematic **60.g5** breakthrough, which also prepares

the invasion of my king through the weak light squares (f3-g4-h5-g6). After **60...hxg5** (**60...fxg5 61.hxg5 h5 62.f6 gxf6 63.g6**) **61.hxg5 ♗d8** (**61...fxg5 62.♗xg5 ♔c8 63.♗e7 ♔d7 64.♗f8**) **62.♔f3**, the win should be near.

PLAN C

The g5 breakthrough is my plan of course, but I am afraid that the black king will be quite active on the queenside and especially against my d3-pawn. So, I will stop his march by **60.♔d1 ♔b6 61.♔c2 ♔b5 62.♔b3** and then I will go on as planned.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 8

Plan A is not a winning one, as Black activates his king by winning tempos.

Plan B is best — see the game.

Plan C is not winning as well, as the white king should have penetrated on the kingside.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
0	**50**	**0**

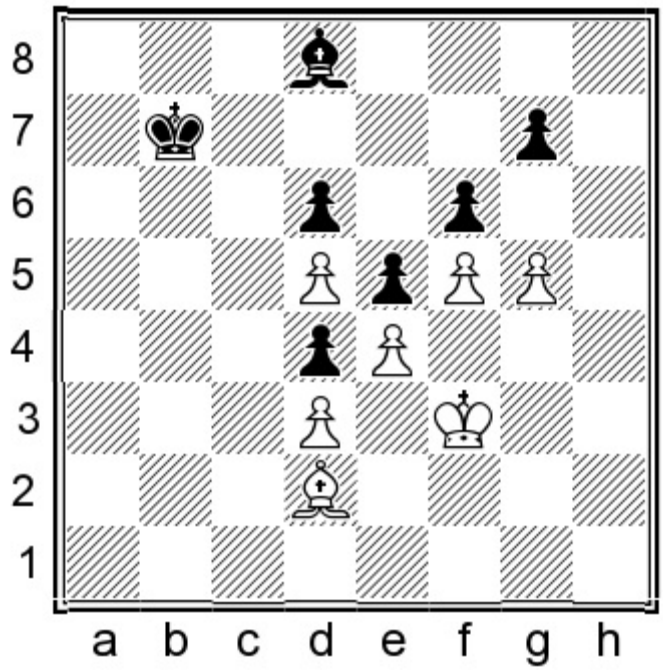
60.g5! hxg5

60...fxg5 61.hxg5 h5 62.f6 gxf6 63.g6.

61.hxg5 ♗d8

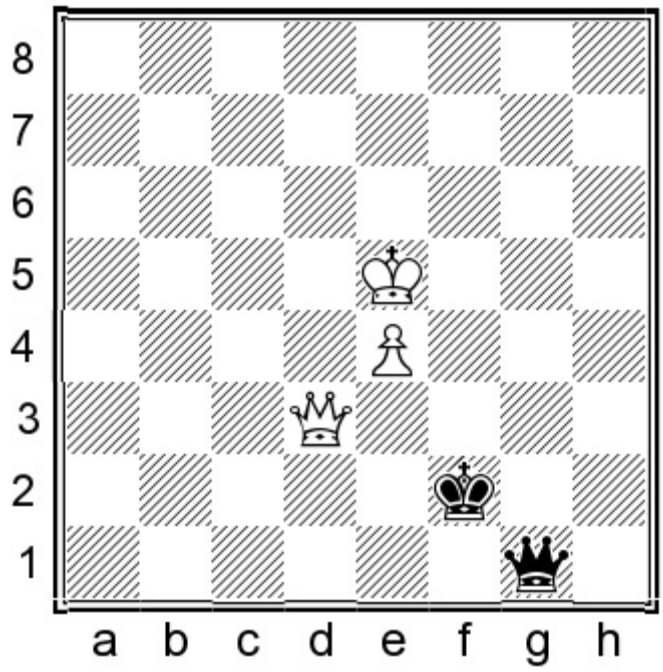
Or 61...fxg5 62.♗xg5 ♔c8 63.♗e7 ♔d7 64.♗f8.

62.♔f3



62...♔c8?

Well, there is no salvation for Black in any case, but his obligation was to make his opponent's life as difficult as it was possible and here there was a line to do so! First of all, 62...fxg5, is not helping either: 63.♔g4 ♔c8 64.♗xg5, but Black should try to activate his king and create some threats himself, by 62...♔a6 63.♔g4 ♔b5 64.♔h5 ♔a4 65.♔g6 ♔b3 66.♔xg7 fxg5 67.f6 ♗xf6+ 68.♔xf6 g4 69.♗e1 ♔c2 70.♔e6 ♔xd3 71.♔xd6 ♔e2 (71...♔xe4, also loses to 72.♔e6 ♔f3 73.d6 g3 74.♗xg3) 72.♔xe5 d3 (nothing to be achieved by 72...♔xe1 73.d6 g3 74.d7 g2 75.d8=♕ g1=♕ 76.♕xd4+–) 73.d6 g3 74.d7 g2 75.♗f2! ♔xf2 76.d8=♕ g1=♕ 77.♕xd3



And although White will win the queen ending, there are chances to go wrong.

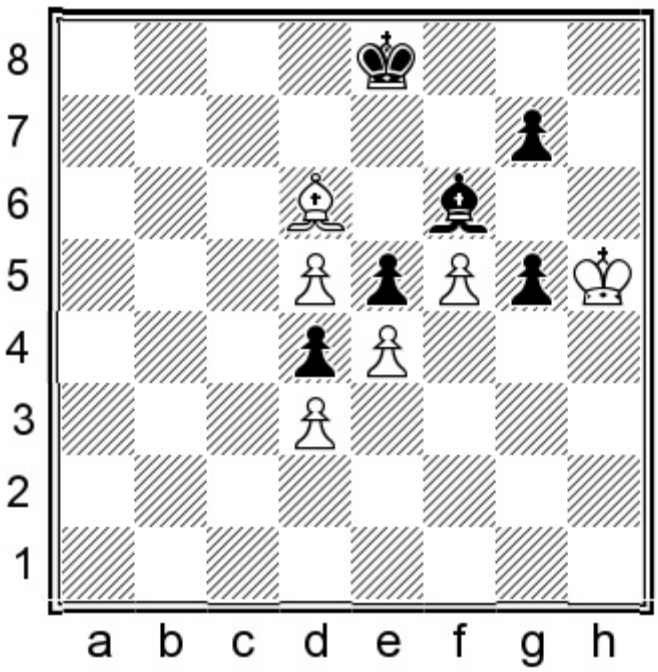
63.♔g4 ♔d7 64.♔h5 ♔e8 65.♗b4

An alternative win can be found in 65.♔g6 ♔f8 66.gxf6 ♗xf6 (66...gxf6 67.♗h6+ ♔e8 68.♗g7) 67.♗g5 ♗xg5 68.♔xg5 ♔f7 69.♔g4! ♔e7 70.♔h4! ♔f6 71.♔h5 ♔f7 72.♔g5+–.

65...fxg5

65...♗e7 66.♔g6 ♔f8 67.gxf6 gxf6 68.♗xd6! ♗xd6 69.♔xf6, wouldn't save the game.

66.♗xd6 ♗f6



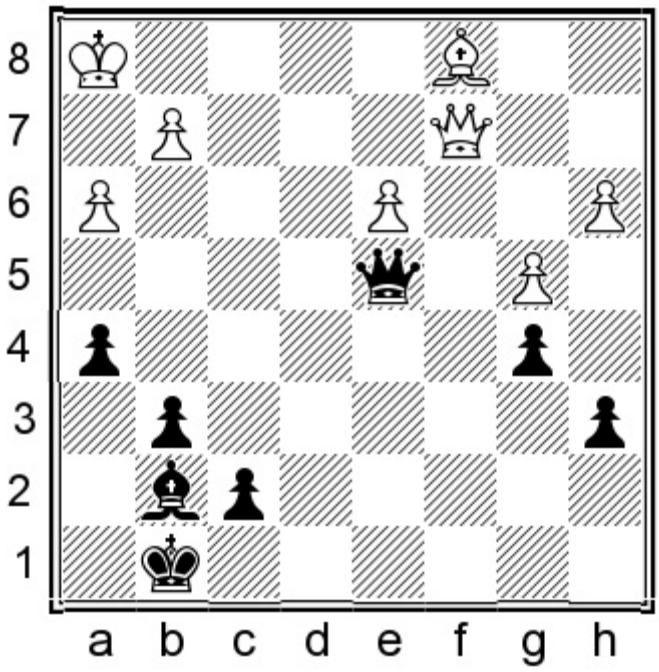
67.♗b4 ♔f7 68.♗d2 ♗e7 69.♗xg5 ♗a3 70.♗d8 ♗d6 71.♔g5

And Black resigned due to 71...♔e8 72.f6 gxf6+ 73.♗xf6 ♔f7 74.♔f5.

1–0

EXERCISE 9
Blau Max
Pavlov Mircea
B31 Bath 1973

31.♕c2



EVALUATION

My advantage is undeniable, as White's pawn structure is weak, both on the queenside and in the centre; especially his queenside pawns are placed in the same colour squares as of my bishop and they are potential targets. The white 'passed' d-pawn is blocked and exposed to attack as well. The question is: how should I proceed? Which plan to follow?

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I think that in positions of this type, the appropriate plans are as follows, in a 'chronological' order: a) Exchange of queens, so as to enable the black king's centralisation. b) Advance of Black's kingside majority, so as to create a passed pawn. c) Exchange of the black passed kingside pawn with the white d-pawn. d) Invasion of the black king on the queenside. So, I will opt for **31...♕c3 32.♕xc3 ♗xc3 33.♔g1 f5 34.♔f2 ♔f7** and so on.

PLAN B

I do not have really to be in hurry, trying to 'prepare' my position for the final assault: **31...♔h7 32.♕d2 ♗e5 33.♕c2 ♔g7 34.♕d2 ♗f6 35.♕c2 ♗e5**, when I am ready for advancing my kingside pawn majority.

PLAN C

Domination of the dark squares, followed by an attack on the opponent king, can't be bad. For this good looks **31...h4 32.♗g5 ♗e5**, when I am ready for ...f5 and ...g5-g4. White stands rather passive and he can't stop my lethal attack.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 9

Plan A is best — see the game analysis.

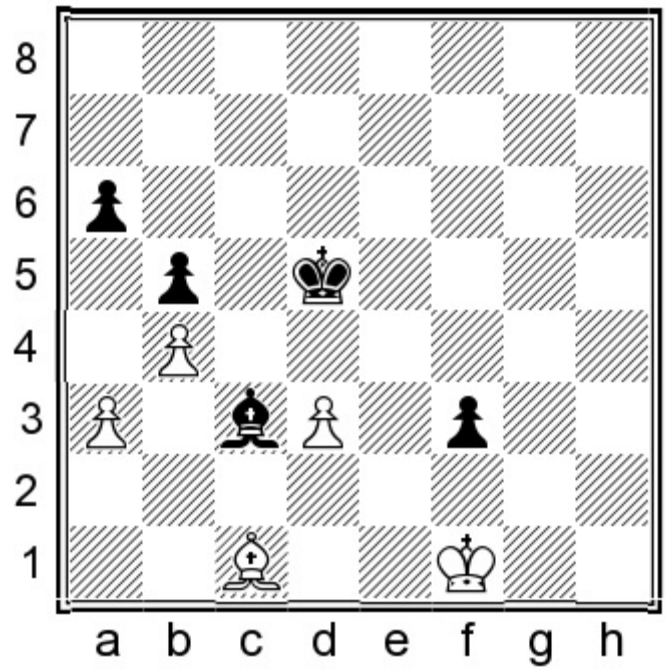
Plan B can be applied, although it is not clear, as White will have counterplay and chances as well.

Plan C is quite similar to Plan B.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**25**	**25**

31...♔h7

Although the text move does not spoil Black's advantage, the most 'natural' continuation should be 31...♕c3! 32.♕xc3 ♗xc3 33.♔g1 f5 34.♔f2 ♔f7 35.♔e2 ♔e6 36.♔d1 ♔d5 (completion of stage a) 37.♔c2 ♗f6 38.♔d1 g5! 39.♔e2 g4 40.♔f2 ♗e5 41.♔e2 f4! 42.hxg4 hxg4 43.♔f1 ♔e6 44.♔e2 ♔f5 45.♔f1 ♗d4! 46.♔e2 ♔e5 47.♔f1 f3 48.gxf3 gxf3 (completion of stage b) 49.♗h6 ♔d5 50.♗c1 ♗c3



And Black is all set for stages c and d: 51.♔f2 (51.♗e3 ♗b2–+) 51...♔d4 52.♔xf3 ♔xd3–+.

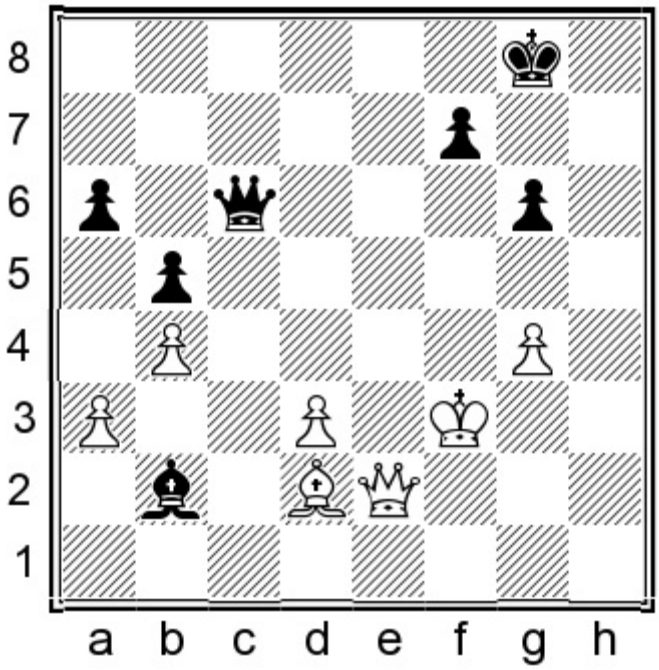
31...♔h7 32.♕d2 ♗e5 33.♕c2 ♔g7 34.♕d2 ♗f6 35.♕c2 ♗e5 36.♕d2 ♔g8 37.♕c2?

White's only chance is 37.♕e1 ♕a1 38.♗d2 ♕xe1+ 39.♗xe1 ♗b2∓.

37...♕a1! 38.♕d2 ♗d4?

Black could have won immediately with 38...♗c3! 39.♕c2 h4!, when the threats of ...♗e5-f4 and ...♗d4-e3 would be conclusive. Overall, in this game Black played 'cowardly'.

39.g3! ♗e5 40.♔g2 ♕d4 41.♕e2 ♕c3 42.♗d2 ♕c2 43.♔f3 ♗b2 44.g4 hxg4+ 45.hxg4 ♕c6+



46.♕e4! ♕f6+

46...♕xe4+? 47.♔xe4 ♗xa3 48.♔d5, can only help White.

47.♔g2 ♗d4?!

Black should have won the a-pawn with 47...♗xa3 48.d4! ♗b2 49.d5 ♗e5 50.g5 ♕h8 51.♔f1 f5! 52.gxf6 ♕xf6+ 53.♔e2 ♕f5, retaining excellent winning chances.

48.♗e3! ♗xe3?

Following the previous note is the correct follow up: 48...♗b2 49.♗d2 ♗xa3!.

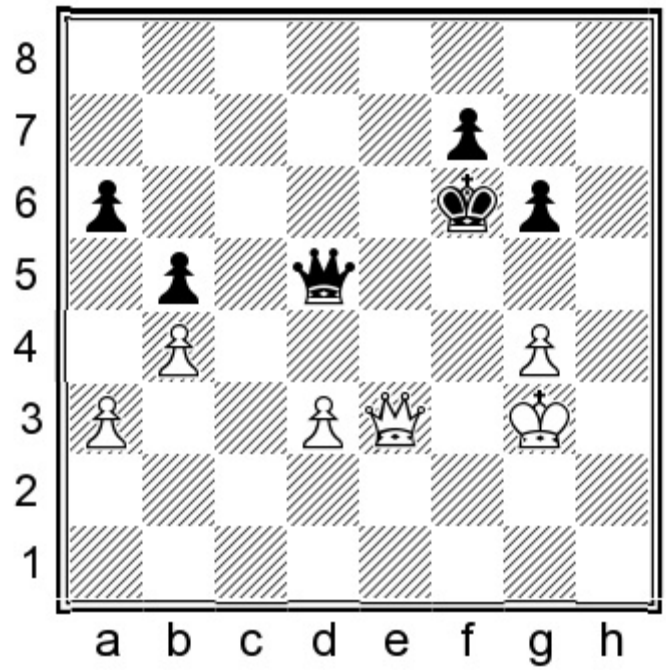
49.♕xe3

As mentioned earlier, Black's correct approach would have been the exchange of queens under favourable circumstances. By exchanging bishops instead, White secures the draw.

49...♕c3

49...♕b2+ 50.♔f3 ♕xa3 51.♕e8+ ♔g7 52.♕e5+ f6 53.♕c7+=.

50.♔f3 ♔g7 51.♔f4 ♕f6+ 52.♔g3 ♕d6+ 53.♔g2 ♕d5+ 54.♔g3 ♕d6+ 55.♔g2 ♕d5+ 56.♔g3 ♔f6



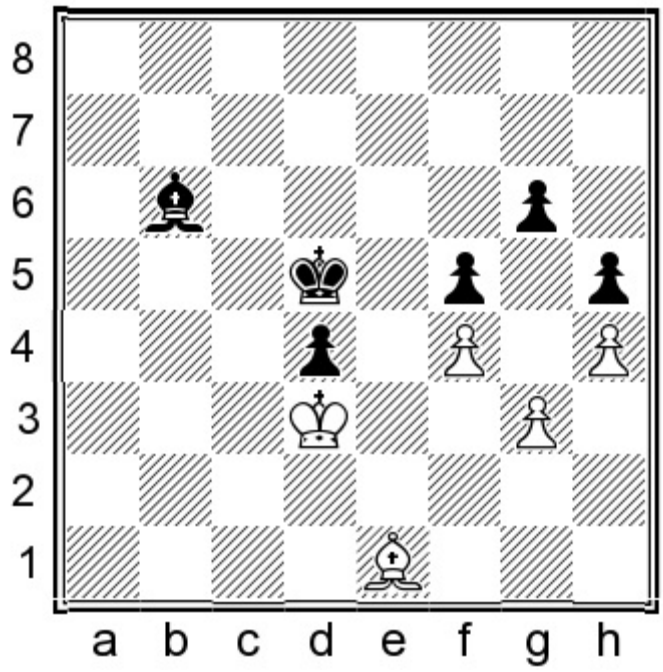
57.d4

Black has nothing to hope for, so he agreed to the draw.

½-½

EXERCISE 10
Lomer Edmund
Nunn John
E60 Germany 2002

49...♔xd5



EVALUATION

My position looks miserable. Not only I am a pawn down, but my kingside pawns can be easily be targeted by the opponent bishop. Well, my only plus is my good king placement, who doesn't allow his counterpart to penetrate. But how to defend?

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Reducing the material on the board looks like a good asset. I can do this by **50.♗f2 ♗a5** (I do not think that there is anything better) **51.♗xd4 ♗e1 52.♗f6 ♗xg3 53.♗g5**. I feel that this position should be drawn, due to the mutual zugzwang.

PLAN B

I do not think that it is a good idea to exchange my g3-pawn for the d4-pawn, as I firstly thought and I can simply wait by **50.♗b4 ♗c5 51.♗e1**, where I do not see how Black can improve, so I should achieve the draw here.

PLAN C

Activity is a key word for 99% of the endgames and I should also follow this rule here. I should go for **50.♗d2 ♗c5 51.♗a5 ♗a3 52.♗b6**, when Black seems to have nothing better than **52...♗c5 53.♗a5**, with a draw.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 10

Plan A is best — see the game analysis.

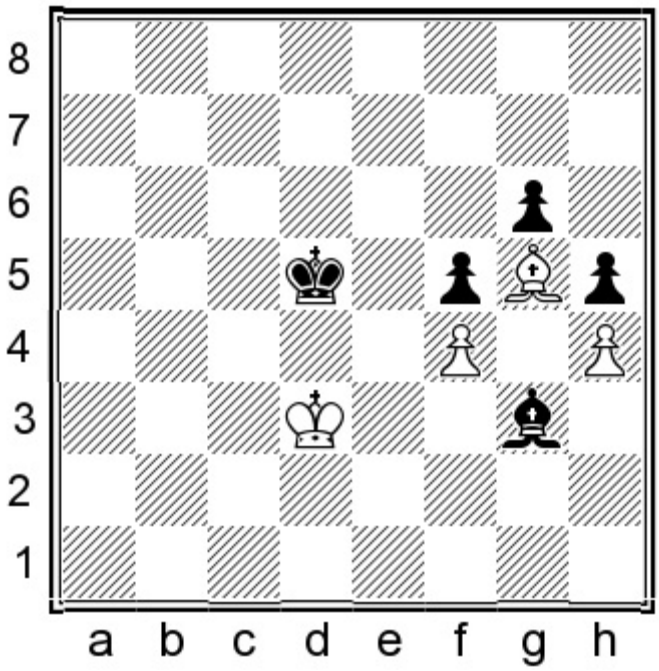
Plan B is a lost case after **51...♗a3**, with the idea **...♗b2-c3**.

Plan C is quite similar to Plan B; **52...♗b2-c3**.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**0**	**0**

50.♗b4?

White could have saved himself by 50.♗f2 ♗a5 51.♗xd4 ♗e1 52.♗f6 ♗xg3 53.♗g5



White has to avoid moving his king, which would allow Black's king to enter his camp via c4 or e4. So he has to manoeuvre his bishop carefully to avoid falling into zugzwang. After 53...♗f2 (only if Black transfers his bishop back to g3 White returns with his bishop to g5 and after 53...♗h2 he always replies 54.♗h6), he has to choose 54.♗d8 (or 54.♗f6) 54...♗c5 and now:

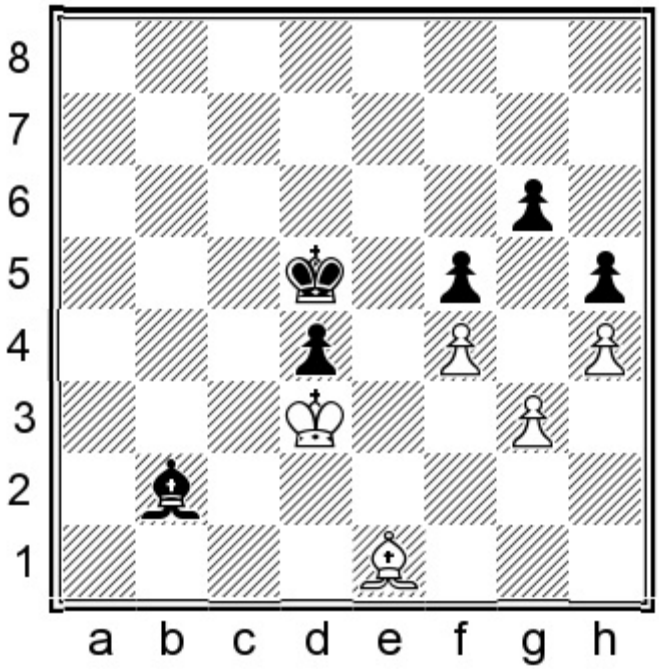
a) 55.♗f6? ♗d6 56.♗g5 ♗c7 57.♔e3 ♔c4 58.♗f6 ♗b6+ 59.♔d2 ♗d4 60.♗d8 ♗g7 61.♔e3 ♗h8 62.♗e7 ♔c3 63.♗d8 ♗d4+ 64.♔e2 ♔c2 65.♗e7 ♗b6 66.♗f6 ♗c7 67.♗g5 (and in this position Black must lose a tempo:) 67...♗b8 68.♗h6 ♗d6 69.♗g5 ♗c7 70.♔e3 (70.♗h6 ♗d8–+) 70...♔d1 71.♗f6 (71.♔d4 ♔e2

72.♔d5 ♔f3 73.♔e6 ♗xf4 74.♔f7 ♔g4 75.♔xg6 ♗g3–+) 71...♔e1 72.♗e7 ♔f1 73.♔f3 ♗b6 74.♗f6 ♔g1 75.♔g3 ♗f2+ 76.♔f3 ♗e1 77.♔e2 ♗g3 78.♔f3 ♔h2 79.♗e7 ♔h3 80.♗f6 ♗xh4 81.♗d4 ♗g3 82.♗g1 h4 83.♗e3 ♔h2 84.♗d4 ♗xf4 85.♔xf4 ♔g2–+.

b) 55.♗a5!, to be ready to meet 55...♗e7 with 56.♗e1 and 55...♗d6, with 56.♗d2.

Also note that after 53...♗f2, White loses if he chooses 54.♔e2? (as it was mentioned, 76.♗d8, or 76.♗f6 is the only valid idea — changing diagonal — for White) 54...♗c5 55.♔d3 ♗d6 56.♔e3 (the white king has to allow his counterpart to march, as 56.♗h6 ♗e7–+, is curtains anyway) 56...♔c4 57.♗f6 ♗c7 58.♗g5 ♗b6+ 59.♔e2 ♔d4 60.♔f3 ♔d3 61.♗e7 ♔d2 62.♗b4+ ♔d1 63.♗c3 ♗d8 64.♔g3 ♔e2 (the penetration of the black king is decisive, as we already have seen) 65.♗b4 ♔e3 66.♗c5+ ♔e4 67.♗b4 ♗c7 68.♗d2 ♗d6 69.♗c1 ♗c5 70.♗b2 ♗e3 71.♗e5 ♗d2 72.♗d6 ♗e1+ 73.♔h3 ♔f3 74.♗e5 ♗d2 0–1, as in Westerinen,H-Timman,J Haifa 1976.

50.♗b4? ♗c5 51.♗e1 ♗a3 52.♗f2 ♗b2 53.♗e1



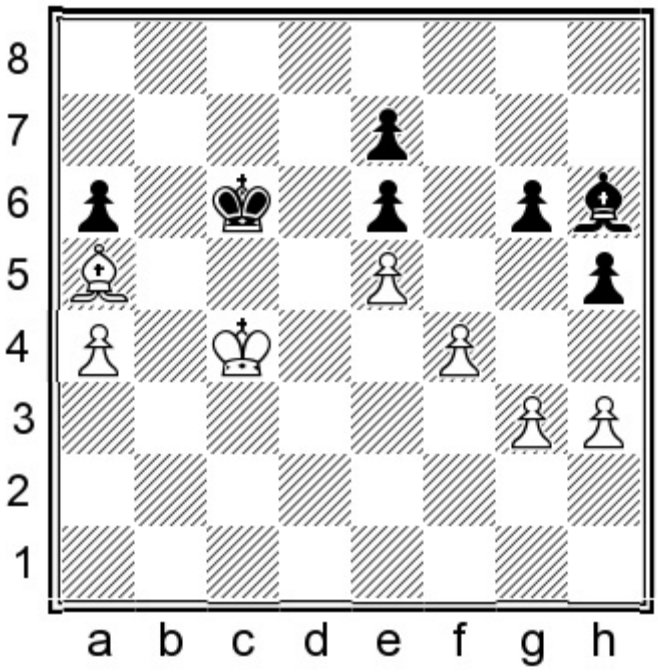
53...♗a1!

Now White is getting into multiple zugzwangs and allows the black bishop to effectively attack the white kingside pawns.

54.♗f2 ♗c3 55.♗g1 ♗e1 56.♗h2 ♗f2 57.♔e2 ♗e3 58.♔d3 ♔c5! 59.g4 hxg4 60.♗g3 ♔d5 0–1

EXERCISE 11
Van der Weide Piet
Olthof Rene
B07 Den Bosch 2009

38...♗h6



EVALUATION

Of course my position is much better; near to winning I would say, mainly based on the fact of the black buried bishop. Naturally things are far from easy, as I am not able to penetrate with my king, at least for the moment. But by applying zugzwang methods, I would be able to do so and cash the point.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

My first priority should be to lock-in the bishop forever, stopping his ...g5 idea. This can be best done by **39.h4 ♗g7 40.♗d8 ♗f8 41.♔b4**. After that, by using the zugzwang method, I will win material which should be enough for the win.

PLAN B

I would like to keep my kingside pawn structure flexible, so I would refrain (at least from the moment) playing **39.h4**, but instead I would go for **39.♗b4**, forcing the black king to retreat. Then I could penetrate with my king. If Black plays ...g5 in general, after fxg5 ♗xg5, I would have gained a 2:1 'free' pawn majority on the kingside and I will create a passed pawn.

PLAN C

As in Plan B, I would love to keep my kingside pawn structure flexible, but at the same time I do not want to allow Black playing ...g5. So, I will opt for **39.♗d2 ♗g7 40.g4 hxg4 41.hxg4**, with a clear plus.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 11

Plan A is simply bad — see the game.

Plan B is not giving much after **39...g5!**, when the black bishop will get free.

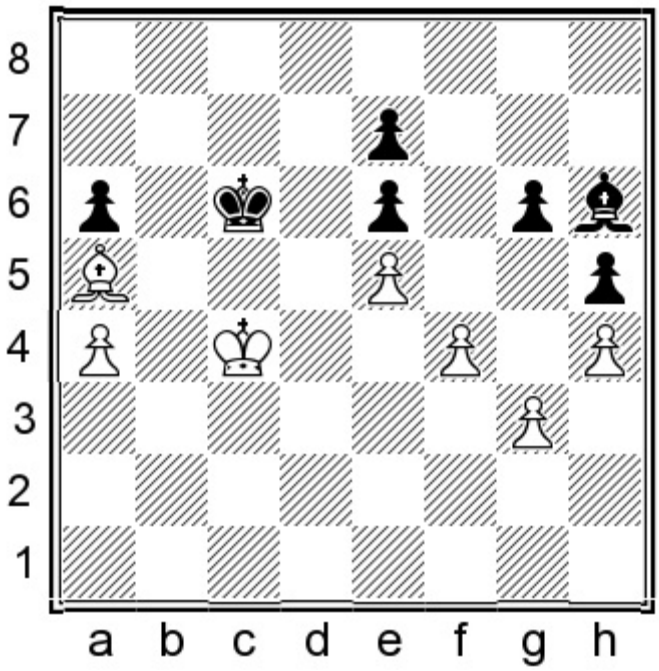
Plan C is best — see the game analysis.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
15	**10**	**50**

39.h4?

It looks like the end, as the bishop will be locked in forever. But White had to go for 39.♗d2 ♗g7 40.g4! hxg4 41.hxg4 ♗h6 (41...g5 42.fxg5 ♗xe5 43.♗c3+–) 42.g5! (now the bishop is also locked in!) 42...♗g7 43.♗b4 ♗f8 44.♗c5 ♔b7 45.♔b4 ♔c6 46.♗e3 ♗g7 47.♔a5 ♔b7 48.♗f2 ♗f8 49.♗c5 and Black is in zugzwang: 49...♔c6 (49...♗g7 50.♗xe7 ♔a7 51.♗f6 ♗f8 52.f5!+–) 50.♔xa6! ♔xc5 51.♔b7+–.

39.h4?



39...♗g7 40.♗d8 ♗f8 41.♔b4

Now, by using the zugzwang method, White will win material, but this will not be enough for a win.

41...♔d7 42.♗b6 ♔c6 43.♔a5 ♔b7 44.♗d8 ♔a7 45.♗b6+

Also nothing was gained by 45.♔b4 ♔b7 46.♔c5 ♔c8 47.♗a5 ♔b7 48.♗b6 ♗g7 49.♗d8 ♗f8 50.a5 ♗g7! (Black has to give up the pawn, as 50...♔c8?, runs into 51.♔b6! ♔xd8 52.♔xa6 ♔c7 53.♔b5 ♔b7 [53...♗g7 54.a6 ♗h6 55.a7 ♔b7 56.a8=♕+! ♔xa8 57.♔c6+–] 54.a6+ ♔a7 55.♔c6 ♔xa6 56.♔d7 ♔b6 57.♔xe6+–) 51.♗xe7 ♔c7 and White cannot improve his position, as the sacrifice 52.♗d8+ ♔xd8 53.♔b6 (53.♔d6? ♗f8+ 54.♔xe6 ♗b4–+) 53...♔d7 54.♔xa6 ♔c6 55.♔a7 ♔c7 56.♔a6 ♗f8 (56...♔c6=) 57.♔b5 ♗a3 58.a6 ♗c1 59.a7 ♔b7 60.a8=♕+ ♔xa8 61.♔c6 ♗e3 62.♔d6 ♗f2 63.♔xe6 ♗xg3 64.♔f7 ♗xf4 65.e6 ♗d6 66.♔xg6 ♗e7 67.♔xh5 ♔b8 68.♔g4 ♔c7 69.h5 ♗f8, leads to a draw.

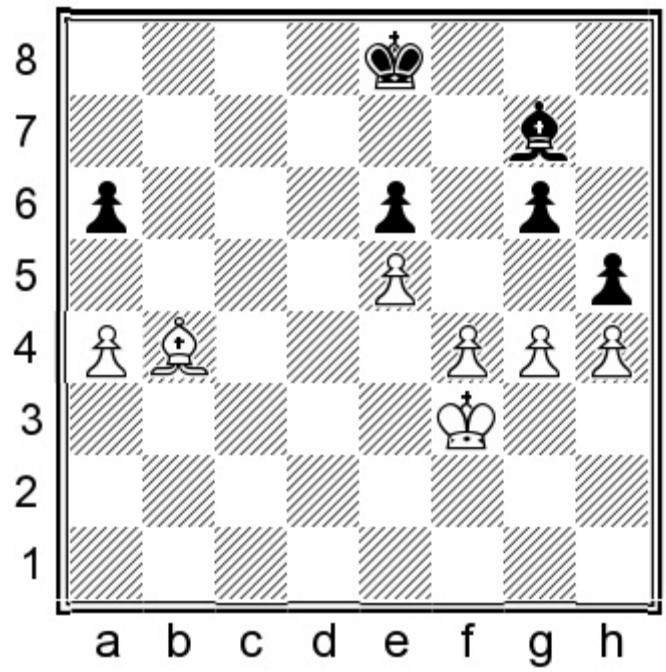
45...♔b7 46.♗c5 ♗g7

Forced, as after 46...♔c6? 47.♔xa6! (again!) 47...♔xc5 48.♔b7 ♔b4 49.♔c6, White wins easily.

47.♗xe7

It seems that it should be easy from now on, but the placement of the white pawns on the 'wrong' colour does not help.

47...♗h6 48.♔b4 ♔c6 49.♔c4 ♗g7 50.♔d4 ♔d7 51.♗b4 ♔c6 52.♔e4 ♔d7 53.♔f3 ♔e8 54.g4



This plan leads to a draw, but the truth is that there is no other satisfactory plan.

54...♔f7?

There was no win after the simple 54...hxg4+ 55.♔xg4 ♗h6! (55...♔f7? 56.♔g5 ♗h8 57.♔h6+–) 56.♗c5 ♔f7, as White cannot make progress and his a-pawn is also on the wrong file in relation to his bishop.

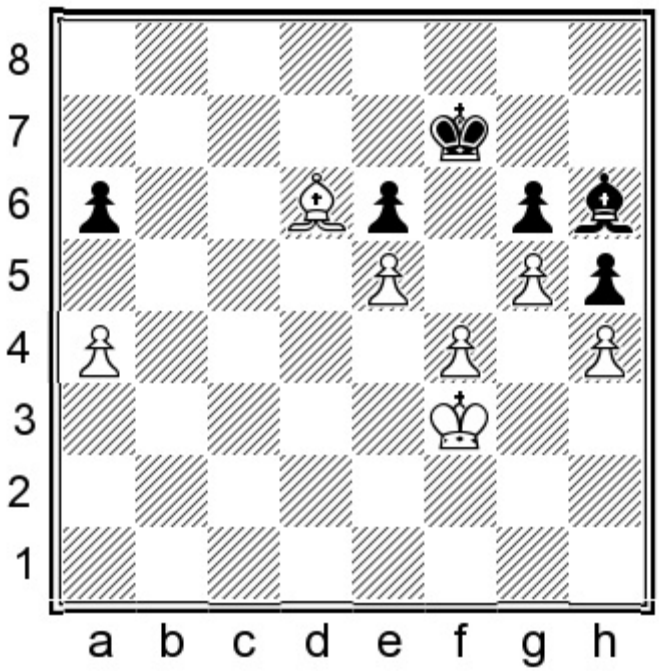
55.♗d6?

Returning the favour. White could win with 55.g5! (remember the note on White's 39th move) 55...♔e8 56.♔e4 ♔d7 57.♔d4 ♔c6 58.♔c4 ♔b7 59.♗e7 ♔c6 60.♗d6 ♔b6 61.♔b4 ♔c6 62.♗c5 ♔d7 63.♔a5+–.

55...♗h6?

A ping-pong of mistakes!

56.g5!



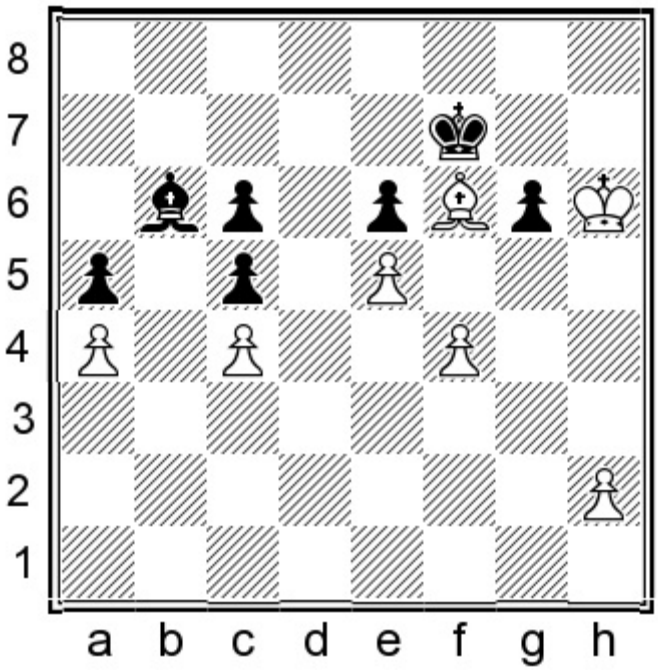
Finally! White wins!

56...♗g7 57.♔e4 ♔e8 58.♔d4 ♔d7 59.♔c5

1–0

EXERCISE 12
Hou Yifan
Koneru Humpy
C67 Antakya 2010

43...♗b6



EVALUATION

In this typical ‘Ruy Lopez — Berlin Defence’ endgame, my advantage is unquestionable, but the main question is if it is enough for a win. Literally I am standing a pawn-up, as the fact of the doubled black c-pawns gives me this pleasure. I need to find concrete methods and apply zugzwang ways.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

A quite interesting idea is to sacrifice my bishop by **44.♗e7**, when Black has to accept it **44...♔xe7** (**44...♗c7**, loses to **45.♗xc5**). But after **45.♔xg6 ♗d8 46.h4 ♔f8 47.h5 ♔g8 48.h6**, I do not see how she will survive.

PLAN B

The Plan A idea looks correct to me but before applying it I should insert the move **44.h4**, which can win an important tempo. After **44...♗c7 45.♔h7 ♗b6 46.♗e7 ♔xe7** (**46...♗a7 47.♗d8+–**) **47.♔xg6 ♔f8** (**47...♗d8 48.♔g7+–**) **48.h5 ♗d8 49.h6 ♔g8 50.h7+ ♔h8 51.♔f7 ♔xh7 52.♔xe6 ♔g7 53.♔d6**, I should win.

PLAN C

I do not think that I can win by sacrificing my bishop in either way. But good and simple seems to take advantage of my ‘extra’ pawn and try to create a passed pawn by **44.h4 ♗c7 45.h5 gxh5 46.♔xh5 ♗b6 47.♔g5 ♗c7 48.f5**. Then the win should be near.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 12

Plan A is not accurate — see the game.

Plan B is best and wins — see the game analysis.

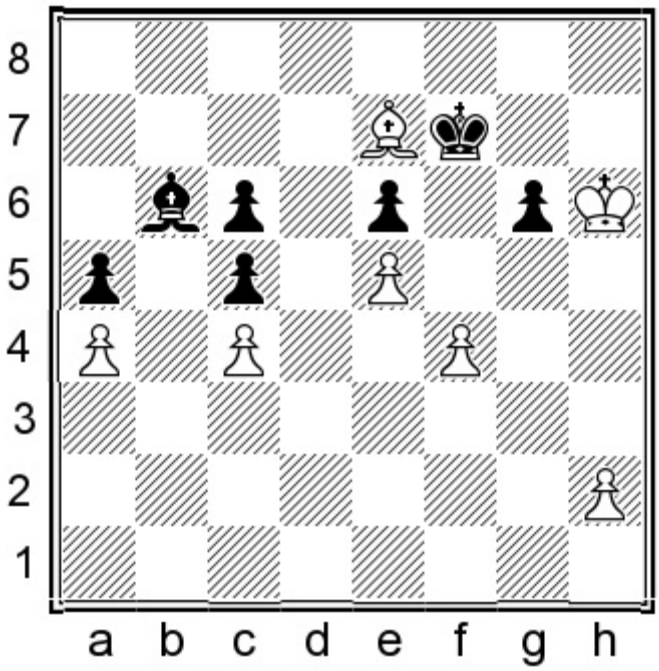
Plan C is simply bad — Black can draw.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
15	**50**	**0**

44.♗e7?

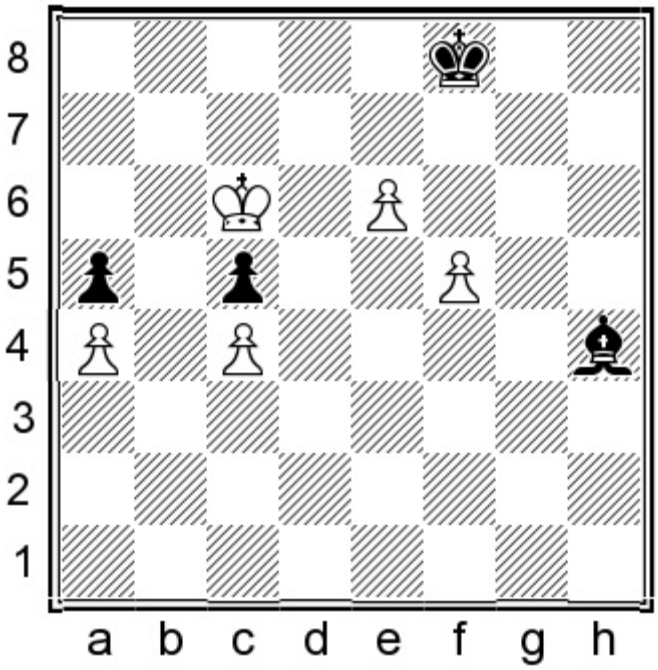
Correct idea but wrong execution! Before she goes for this trick, she should have inserted 44.h4!, an important tempo as can be seen by the analysis: 44...♗c7 45.♔h7 ♗b6 46.♗e7! ♔xe7 (46...♗a7 47.♗d8+–) 47.♔xg6 ♔f8 (47...♗d8 48.♔g7+–) 48.h5 ♗d8 49.h6 ♔g8 50.h7+ ♔h8 51.♔f7 ♔xh7 52.♔xe6 ♔g7 53.♔d6+–.

44.♗e7?



44...♗c7?

And Black immediately returns the favour! She should have captured the bishop and then some precise moves guarantee the draw: 44...♔xe7! 45.♔xg6 ♗d8 46.h4 ♔f8 47.h5 ♔g8 48.h6 (48.f5 exf5 49.♔xf5 ♔g7 50.♔e6 ♗c7=) 48...♗h4 49.h7+ ♔h8 50.♔f7 ♔xh7 51.♔xe6 ♔g7 52.♔d7 ♔f8 53.e6 (53.f5 ♗g3 54.e6 ♗h4 55.♔xc6



55...♔g7! (55...♗e7? 56.♔b5 ♗d8 57.♔xc5 ♔e7 58.♔d5! ♔f6 59.c5+–) 56.♔xc5 ♗e7+ 57.♔b5 ♔f6=) 53...♗f6 54.f5 ♗e7 55.♔xc6 ♔g7 56.♔b6 ♔f6 57.♔xa5 ♔xf5 58.♔b6 ♗d8+ (58...♔xe6? 59.♔c7!+–) 59.♔xc5 ♔xe6 60.♔b5 ♔d7 61.a5 ♗xa5 62.♔xa5 ♔c6=.

45.♗xc5

White won a pawn and now, with some precise technique, the game.

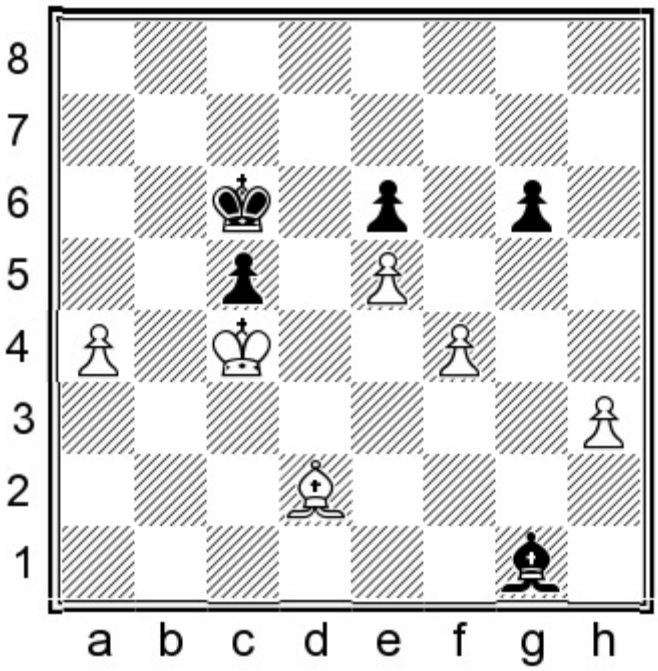
45...♗d8 46.♗f2 ♗e7 47.c5! ♗f8+ 48.♔g5 ♗e7+ 49.♔g4 ♔e8 50.♗e1 ♗xc5

Black has no real option. The alternative 50...♗d8, loses to 51.♗h4 ♗c7 52.♗f6 ♔f7 53.♔g5 ♗b8 54.♗d8 ♗a7 55.♗b6+–.

51.♗xa5 ♗e7 52.♔f3

52.h4 ♔f7 53.♗d2 ♗d8 54.a5 ♗c7 55.h5 ♔g7 56.hxg6 ♔xg6 57.f5+! exf5+ 58.♔f4 ♗d8 59.a6 ♗b6 60.♗c3, also wins. But White is in no hurry; she can afford to play around!

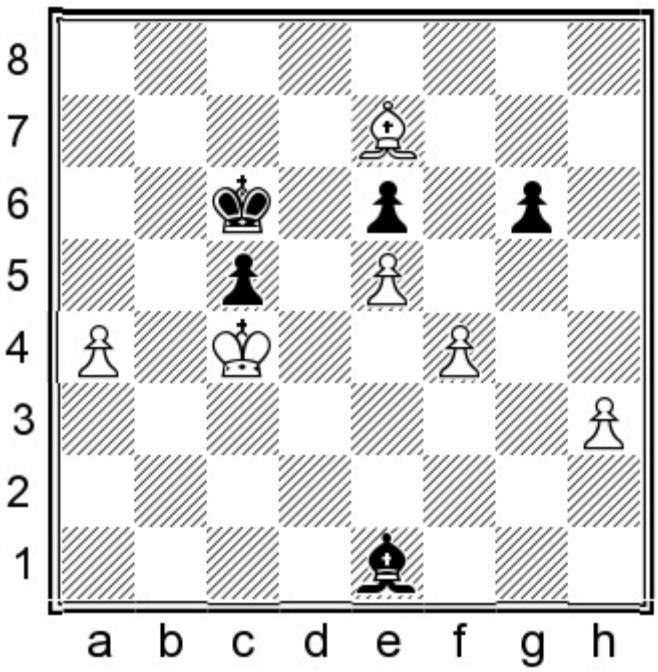
52...♔d7 53.♔e4 c5 54.♔d3 ♔c6 55.♔c4 ♗h4 56.♗d2 ♗f2 57.h3 ♗g1



58.♗c1

58.f5, is another tactical win: 58...gxf5 (58...exf5 59.e6 ♗h2 60.a5+–) 59.h4 ♗h2 60.h5 ♗xe5 61.h6 f4 62.a5 f3 63.♗e3+–.

58...♗f2 59.♗d2 ♗g1 60.♔d3 ♗f2 61.♗e3 ♗e1 62.♔c4 ♗b4 63.♗f2 ♔b6 64.♗e3 ♔c6 65.♗g1 ♔b6 66.♗f2 ♔c6 67.♗h4 ♗d2 68.♗g5 ♗e1 69.♗e7



69...♗f2

The alternative 'defence' was 69...♗b4, when White wins by 70.♗f8! (70.♗d8 ♗d2!) 70...♔b6 71.♗d6! ♔c6 72.♗e7 ♔b6 73.a5+! ♔xa5 (73...♗xa5 74.♗d8++–) 74.♗xc5 ♗d2 75.♗d4! ♗xf4 76.♔c5+–.

70.a5 ♗e3 71.♗g5 ♗f2 72.h4 ♗g3 73.a6 ♗f2 74.h5! gxh5 75.f5 exf5 76.e6 ♗g3 77.e7 ♔d7 78.a7

1–0

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KNIGHT POWER

Knight endings are very similar to pawn endings. This comparison is based on the fact that the knight, by nature, is unable to win or lose a tempo; this factor must always be taken into account.

On the other hand, the knight's supporters are compensated by its ability to exert influence on every square of the board, in contrast to the bishop, that can control only half of them.

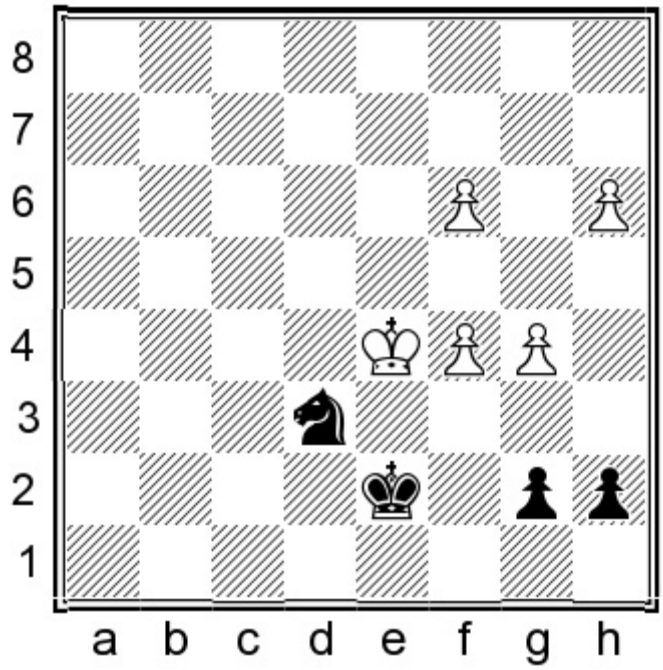
SOS Tip 1 — Knight Endgame

1. Knight vs Pawn: A lone knight is sometimes able even to win against a pawn, when that is in the way of its king.
2. Knight vs Pawn: With a knight against a pawn, the knight can secure the draw when it can control any of the squares on the pawn's path, with the exception of the promotion squares of rook pawns (a1 and h1).
3. Knight vs Pawn: When the pawn has reached its 7th rank, then an a-, b-, g- or h-pawn offers good winning chances, while c-, d-, e- or f-pawn minimal ones — or none at all.
4. Knight vs Two Pawns: The knight vs two pawns ending is generally drawn, as the knight can stop two connected pawns.
5. Knight vs Two Pawns: When the pawns are separated, the knight is able to defend only when there are a maximum of three files between them. In the case of greater remoteness, all depends on the placement of the kings.
6. Knight vs Three Pawns: The case of knight vs three pawns is a very difficult one. The knight is usually fighting a lost case. In general, three connected pawns win the game if at least two of them have reached their 5th rank or beyond. If two of the three are connected and the third separated from them, the defending idea consists of the knight immobilising two of them and the king capturing the third one.
7. Two Knights vs Pawn: It is well known that two knights cannot force mate on a lone king. However, in certain positions, two knights against king & pawn(s) are able to do this!
While in the first case mate could be 'enforced' only if the defending king goes through a stalemate (not possible!), with additional pawns on the defending side this is not a problem. The winning idea consists of three parts:
a. Immobilise the pawn.
b. Direct the enemy king to a corner, restricting him to maximum two available squares.
c. At the appropriate moment, 'release' the pawn and deliver mate.
8. Knight & Pawn vs King: Such positions almost always win. There do exist a few exceptions though.
9. Knight & Pawns vs Pawns: In general, the knight wins such positions, as it can immobilise and capture the enemy pawns.

10. Knight & Pawn vs Knight: This ending is usually drawn, as the knight can be sacrificed for the pawn. In order to achieve the sacrifice, the cooperation of knight and king is necessary; otherwise, the pawn is able to win the game. If the pawn has reached the 7th rank and is supported by both king and knight, then the position is won.
11. Knight & Pawns vs Knight & Pawns — Material Advantage: As stated earlier, knight endings resemble pawn endings, as the knight cannot win or lose a tempo. Consequently, a material advantage is quite significant and, in conjunction with other strategic elements (healthy pawn structure, good king placement, etc), usually brings victory.

EXERCISE 13
Cela Altin
Grivas Efstratios
B30 Ikaria 1995

64.b5



EVALUATION

My opponent has just two pawns for my knight, but the position is more difficult than it seems at first sight. White has many drawing chances and, as the knight cannot win a tempo, I must be very careful. My main idea must be to push the white king back and attack the enemy pawns efficiently.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Obviously I should create targets and blockade the enemy pawns. I should opt for **64...♘c7+ 65.♔c4 a6!**, forcing White to advance (and consequently weaken) his a-pawn. After **66.a4** (the alternative **66.bxa6 bxa6 67.♔b4 ♔c6–+**, is easy) **66...a5!**, the white a-pawn will be a permanent target.

PLAN B

The extra piece will be strong when it will be activated and start to attack enemy targets from behind. For this I will have to go for **64...♘f4+ 65.♔d4 ♘e2+**, when my knight will be proven lethal.

PLAN C

My first priority is to create blockading positions, where the knight will have safe squares, attacking the enemy pawns. For this good looks **64...b6 65.cxb6 axb6 66.a4 ♘d8 67.c4 ♘b7** and I will opt for it.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 13

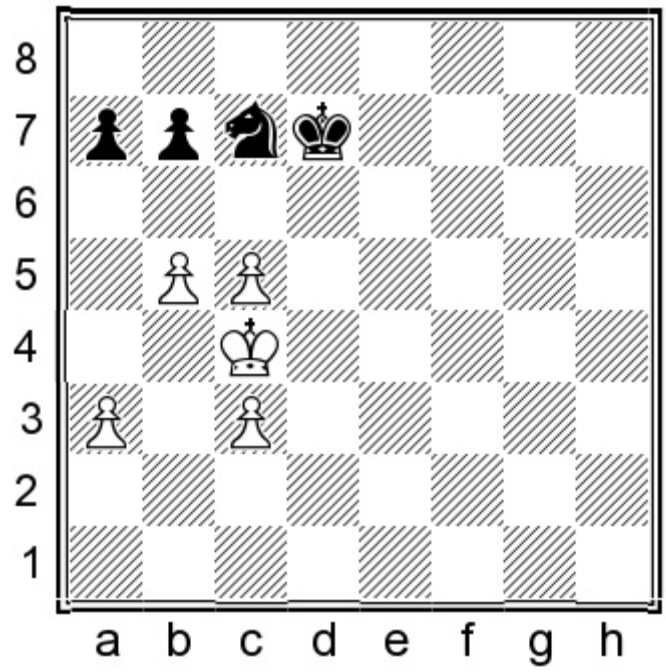
Plan A is best and wins — see the game.

Plan B is nothing serious for Black after **66.♔d3!**.

Plan C is simply bad — White can draw: **68.c5! bxc5 69.a5**.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**10**	**0**

64...♘c7 65.♔c4



65...a6!

Forcing White to advance (and consequently weaken) his a-pawn.

66.a4 a5!

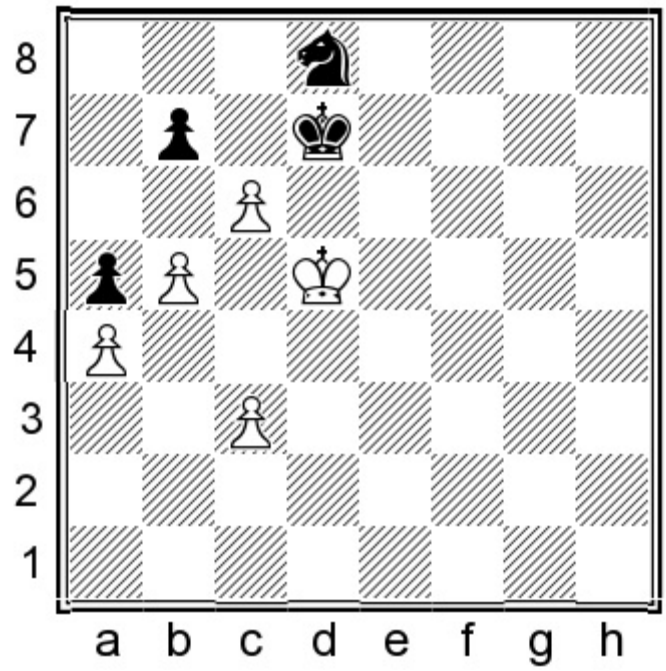
Now the white a-pawn will be a permanent target.

67.♔d4

After 67.b6 ♘a6 68.♔b5 ♘b8!, the immobilised white pawns will be captured.

67...♘e6+ 68.♔d5 ♘d8! 69.c6+

The alternative 69.c4 ♔c7 70.♔e5 (70.♔d4 ♘c6+! 71.♔d5 [71.bxc6 ♔xc6 72.♔c3 ♔xc5–+] 71...♘b8 72.♔d4 ♘d7 73.♔d5 b6!, winning the white a4-pawn) 70...b6 71.c6 ♘f7+ 72.♔d5 ♘d6 73.c5 (73.♔d4 ♘f5+ 74.♔d5 ♘e3+ 75.♔d4 ♘d1–+) 73...♘c8! does not save White either.



69...♔c7!

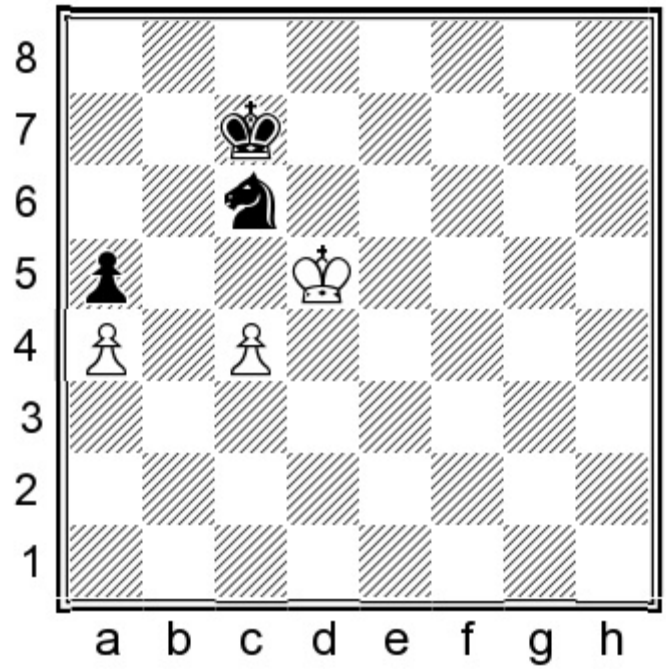
The careless 69...bxc6+? 70.bxc6+ ♔c7 71.♔c5!, would lead to a theoretical draw. The b5-square is critical and must be controlled by Black in order to achieve victory.

70.c4

Or 70.cxb7 ♘xb7 71.c4 ♔b6!–+.

70...bxc6+! 71.bxc6 ♘xc6

The 'most' valuable point of the game is indentified in the next diagram. We have already seen it in the starting examples, but it is always good to repeat again and again, until we fully understand...



72.♔c5

If White was to move, he could reach the theoretical draw with 73.♔b5!.

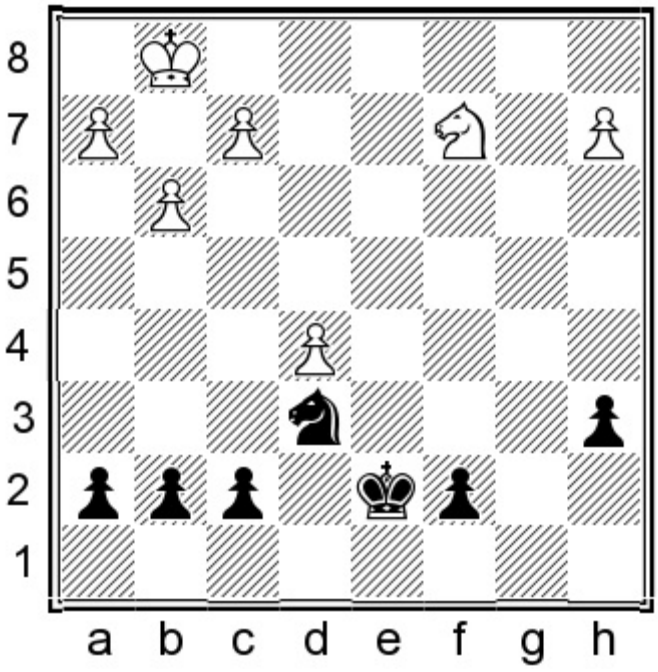
72...♘a7! 73.♔d5 ♔b6 74.♔d6 ♘c6 75.c5+ ♔b7 76.♔d7 ♘a7 77.♔d6 ♔c8! 78.c6

And White resigned: 78...♔d8 79.♔d5 ♔c7 80.♔c5 ♘xc6 81.♔b5 ♔b7 82.♔c5 ♘a7–+.

0–1

EXERCISE 14
Sax Gyula
Tal Mihail
C80 Tallinn 1979

30.g3



EVALUATION

I have seized the opportunity of transferring the game to a favourable knight ending. My superiority is based on the passed c-pawn and the weaknesses that will be created on the light squares in White's camp, after the more or less compulsory move f4 to support the e5-pawn. Last, but not least, my king will be much better placed than his counterpart. All these small advantages, when viewed together, prove my advantage.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I should improve my king and I should create a safe path, by opting for **30...a5 31.f4 g5 32.f5 ♘c5**. The white central pawns have become weak and my king will advance to attack them, improving my plus.

PLAN B

My main priority, as nearly in all endings, should be to improve my king. So, I should go for the immediate **30...♔c6**. After **31.f4 ♔d5** (**31...♔c5 32.♔f2 ♔c4 33.♔e3 ♔c3 34.♘e1 ♔b2 35.f5 ♘d8 36.♘d3+**) **32.♘b4+ ♔c4 33.♘xa6 ♔b5 34.♘b8 ♔b6**, my opponent should be in trouble.

PLAN C

Passed pawns should be pushed, so starting with **30...c5**, looks natural, as the passed pawn sets off on its mission, on the way supporting the desirable ...♘d4. After **31.f4 ♘d4 32.♘e3 ♔e6**, my king will also improve, giving me a clear edge.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 14

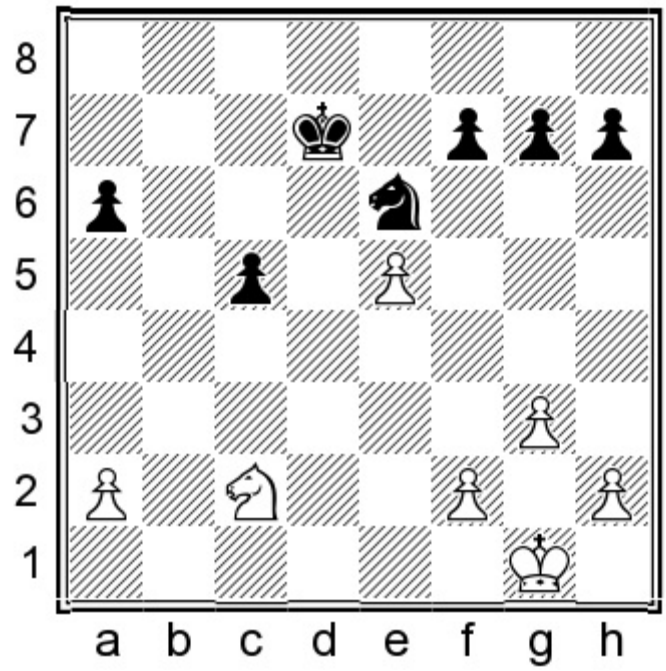
Plan A is not much; after **33.♘d4**, White should be OK.

Plan B is nothing serious: **35.f5 ♘c5 36.♔f1 ♔b7 37.e6 fxe6 38.fxe6 ♘xe6 39.♘d7**, when all Black has achieved is to reduce the number of pawns on the board.

Plan C is the best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
15	**10**	**50**

30...c5!



The passed pawn sets off on its mission, on the way supporting the desirable 31...♘d4.

31.f4 ♘d4! 32.♘e3

White cannot exchange the knights, as the resulting pawn ending is lost: 32.♘xd4 cxd4 33.♔f2 ♔e6 34.♔e2 (34.♔f3 ♔d5 35.g4 [35.h3 h5 36.a3 g6 37.h4 ♔c4] 35...g5! 36.fxg5 [36.h3 gxf4 37.♔xf4 ♔c4] 36...♔xe5 37.h3 [37.♔e2 ♔e4] 37...♔d5 38.h4 ♔c4, with a win for Black) 34...♔d5 35.♔d3 h5! 36.h3 a5! 37.a4 g6 38.g4 hxg4 39.hxg4 g5–+.

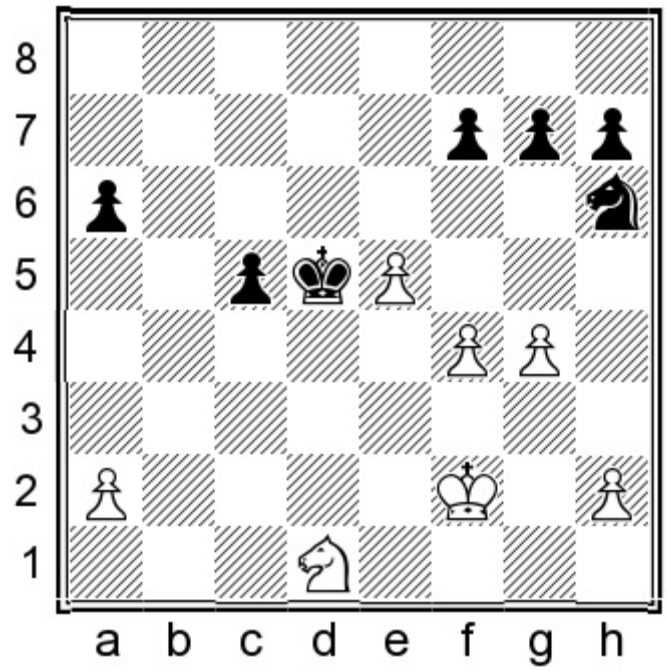
32...♔e6 33.♔f2 ♘f5 34.♘d1

Once again, the knight exchange loses: 34.♘xf5 ♔xf5 35.♔f3 g5 36.g4+ ♔e6.

34...♔d5 35.g4

White is forced to continue actively, as in any other case Black would win more and more space, comfortably preparing the invasion of his king. Thus, the passive 35.♔e2 ♔d4 36.♔d2 h5 37.♘c3 h4 38.g4 ♘e3 39.h3 ♘g2, is easy for Black.

35...♘h6!



A clash with the basic principle of piece centralisation, but the gain of tempo is more important. Instead, 35...♘d4? 36.♘c3+ ♔c4 37.♘e4 ♔b4?! (37...♔d5=) 38.♔e3, intending 39.♘d6, could be even better for White!

36.♔f3 ♔d4 37.♘e3 g6

Necessary, in order to prevent White's intended f4-f5 advance. Black's alternative option is 37...c4?! and now:

a) 38.♘f5+? ♔d3! (38...♘xf5? 39.gxf5 ♔d5 40.♔e3 g5 [40...g6? 41.e6! fxe6 42.f6 ♔d6 43.♔d4+–] 41.e6 fxe6 42.fxe6 gxf4+ 43.♔xf4 ♔xe6 44.♔e4=) 39.♘xh6 c3!–+.

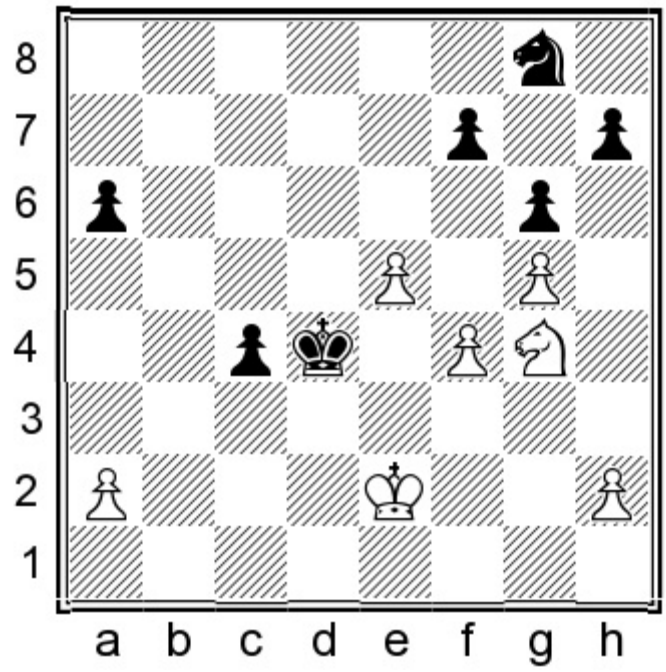
b) 38.g5? ♘g8 39.♘c2+ ♔c3 40.♘e3 ♔d3∓.

c) 38.f5! ♔d3 39.g5 ♘g8 40.f6! gxf6 41.exf6! c3 42.♔f4 c2 43.♘xc2 ♔xc2 44.♔e5=.

38.g5 ♘g8!

Now, however, the knights' exchange with 38...♘f5? 39.♘xf5+ gxf5 40.h4 ♔d3 41.h5 c4 42.g6, leads to a draw.

39.♘g4 c4! 40.♔e2



40...c3

The direct 40...♔e4?, would not suffice for victory. By playing 41.♘f6+! (41.e6 fxe6 42.♘f6+ ♔xf4 43.♘xg8 ♔xg5 44.♘e7 ♔g4, gives Black some chances) 41...♘xf6 42.gxf6 ♔f5 43.h4 h6 44.♔d2 g5 45.fxg5 (45.hxg5? h5!–+) 45...hxg5 46.hxg5 (46.h5? g4 47.h6 ♔g6 48.e6 fxe6–+) 46...♔xg5 47.e6! (47.♔c3? ♔f5 48.♔xc4 ♔xe5 49.♔b4 ♔xf6 50.♔a5 ♔e5 51.♔xa6 f5 52.♔b7 [52.♔b5 f4 53.♔c4 ♔e4 54.♔c3 ♔e3] 52...f4 53.a4 f3 54.a5 f2 55.a6 f1=♕ 56.a7 ♔d6! 57.a8=♕ ♕b5+ 58.♔a7 ♔c7!), White would succeed in drawing the game.

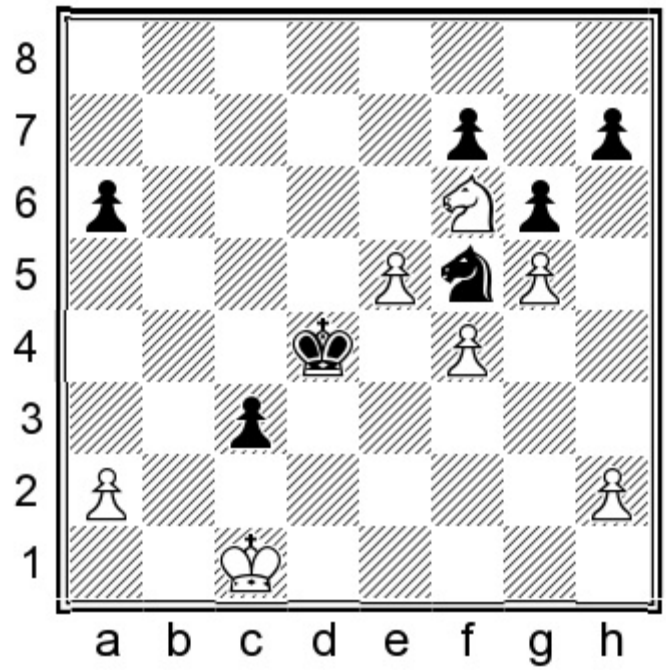
41.♔d1

Also losing is 41.♘f6 ♘e7 42.♘xh7 ♘d5 43.♘f6 ♘xf4+ 44.♔d1 ♔d3.

41...♘e7 42.♘f6 ♘f5?!

42...♘c6!, is a far more accurate move.

43.♔c1



43...a5!

Making it hard for White to find a useful move, while the advance of the a-pawn will also prove useful.

44.♘d7 ♘e3!

After the premature 44...♔e4 45.♔c2 ♔xf4 46.♔xc3 ♔xg5 47.♔c4, White, by winning the black a-pawn, would obtain counterplay. It is much preferable for Black to retain the initiative and avoid cashing in quickly and unnecessarily.

45.♘b8 ♔d3 46.♘c6

Or 46.♘d7 ♘d5 47.♘c5+ ♔c4 48.e6 fxe6 49.♘xe6 a4–+.

46...a4 47.♘d8 ♘d5 48.e6 fxe6

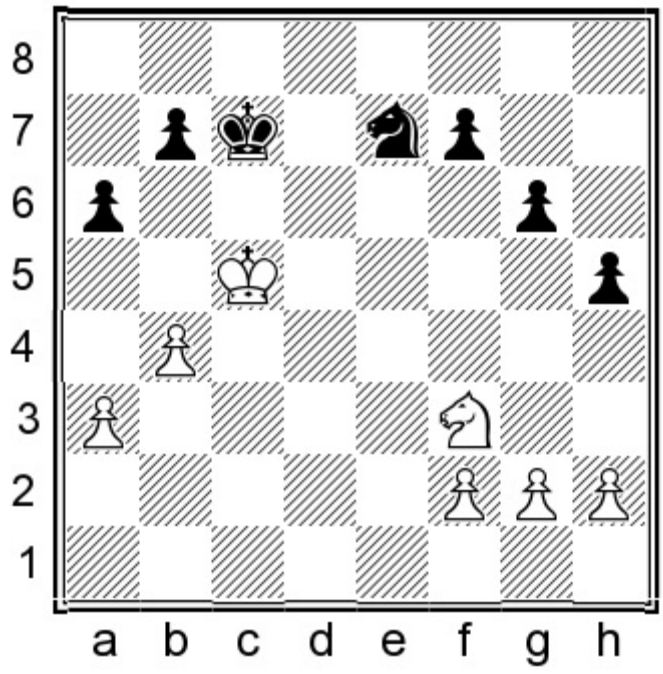
Even better is 48...♘xf4!.

49.♘xe6 a3 50.♘c5+ ♔c4 51.♘e4 ♘b4 52.♔b1 ♔d4

0–1

EXERCISE 15
Botvinnik Mikhail
Kholmov Ratmir
D40 Moscow 1969

35...♔c7



EVALUATION

In this knight ending my king is better placed than his counterpart, while my knight can be also more active and can attack the enemy pawns. It is therefore not strange at all that I hold a significant advantage.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

My king, despite the fact that he will have to retreat a bit, is optimally placed but my knight is not. I think that I should improve my piece s well and this can be best done by **36.♘d2 b6+ 37.♔d4 ♔d6 38.♘c4+ ♔c6 39.♔e5**, when I can feel safe that I hold the advantage.

PLAN B

I think that my first priority should be to create weaknesses to my opponent's pawn structure and then fixe them, in order to attack them. So, I should opt for **36.♘g5 f6 37.♘h7 f5 38.h4**, when I feel that I am in the right track.

PLAN C

As in Plan A, I feel that my knight should improve, creating at the same time weaknesses in my opponent's pawn structure. I can opt for **36.♘e5 b6+ 37.♔d4 f6 38.♘c4 ♔c6 39.g3**, when my advantage remains strong.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 15

Plan A is playable and gives a slight edge to White.

Plan B is the best — see the game.

Plan C is similar to Plan A.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
25	**50**	**25**

36.♘g5! f6 37.♘h7! f5 38.h4

White first weakened his opponent's pawn structure and now fixes it, in order to attack it.

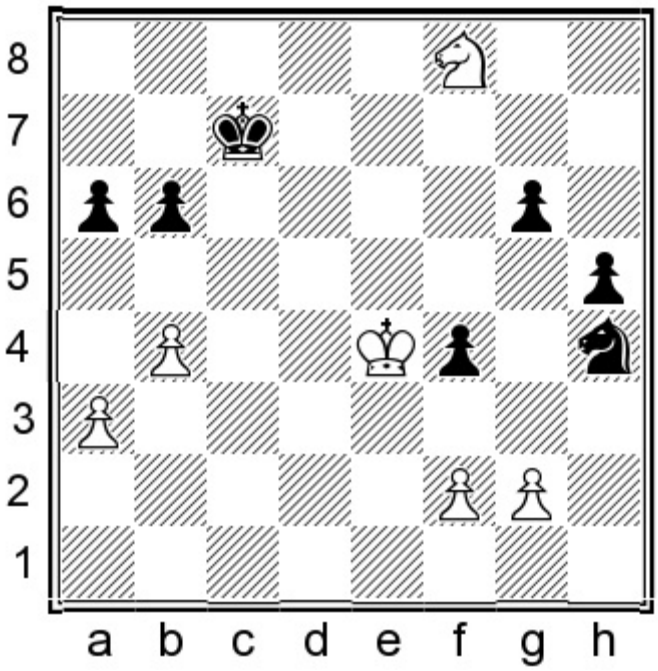
38...f4

38...b6+, is an alternative but Black is also in trouble: 39.♔c4 ♔c6 40.♘f8 b5+ 41.♔d4 ♔d6 42.g3 ♘c6+ 43.♔e3 ♘e5 44.♔f4 ♘d3+ 45.♔g5 ♘xf2 46.♘xg6 ♘e4+ 47.♔xf5 ♘xg3+ 48.♔g5±.

39.♘f8! b6+

Black's best practical chance might be the pawn advance 39...f3!? 40.g3! ♘f5 41.♘xg6 ♘xg3 42.♔d4±.

40.♔d4 ♘f5+ 41.♔e4 ♘xh4



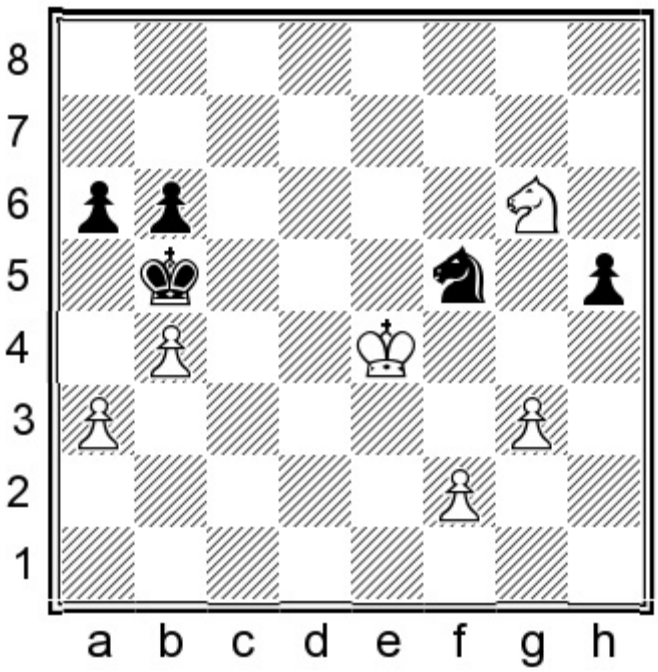
42.♘e6+! ♔c6

Neither would the alternative 42...♔d6 43.♘xf4 g5 44.g3, help Black.

43.♘xf4 ♔b5

This is a correct strategy — counterplay is the only way for Black to say in the game and this can only be found on the queenside. 43...g5? 44.g3!, also loses.

44.g3 ♘f5 45.♘xg6



45...♘h6?

A much better try seems to be 45...♘d6+ 46.♔d5 ♘f5 47.♘f4! (47.♔e5? ♘h6 48.f3 ♔a4 49.♔f6 ♔xa3 50.♘e7 ♔xb4 51.♔g6 a5, can only be good for Black) 47...♔a4 48.♘xh5 ♔xa3 49.g4 ♘h4 50.f4 a5!

(50...♔xb4? 51.f5 a5 52.♘f4 ♘f3 53.f6 ♘g5 54.♘e6 ♘h7 55.f7 a4 56.g5+–) 51.bxa5 bxa5 52.f5 ♔b3 53.♘f4 a4 54.f6 a3 55.f7 a2 56.f8=♕ a1=♕ 57.♕f7±.

46.♘e5 ♔a4 47.♘c4! ♔b3

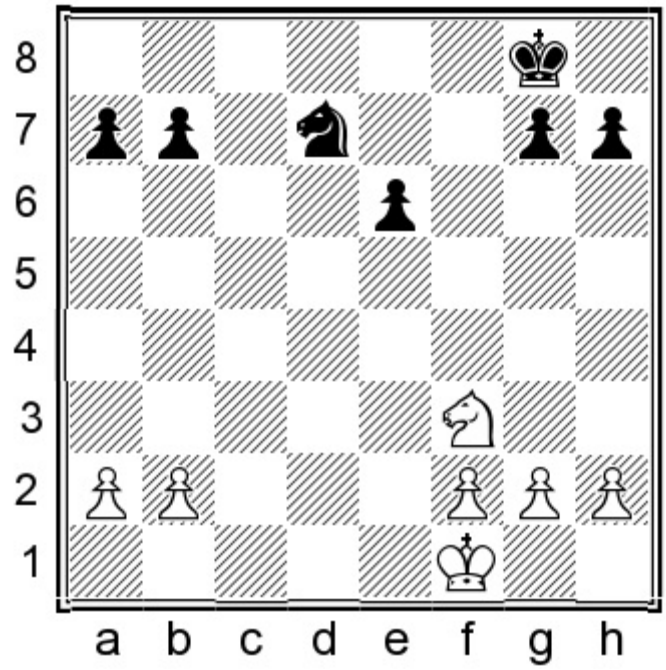
The last try, as 47...b5 48.♘a5 ♔xa3 49.♘c6, is equally hopeless.

48.♘xb6 ♔xa3 49.♘d5 ♔b3 50.f4 ♔c4 51.♘c7! ♔xb4 52.♘xa6+

1–0

EXERCISE 16
Timman Jan
Ree Hans
D40 Amsterdam 1984

23...♘xd7



EVALUATION

In a knight ending, pawn weaknesses are more significant than in any other type. Black has only one weak link in his position, the isolated e-pawn, but my advantage is already pleasant. So, improving my king and knight should be my primary thoughts.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I think that it would be nice to draw the weak black e-pawn nearer to my camp and for this I will opt for **24.♘g5 e5 25.♔e2 h6 26.♘e4 b6 27.♔d3 ♔f7 28.♔c4 ♔e6 29.♔b5 ♘b8**, when I am retaining the advantage but of course with no guarantee of victory.

PLAN B

My feeling is quite similar to Plan A, but I think that I should go for **24.♘d4 e5** (**24...♔f7? 25.♘b5 a6 26.♘d6+**) **25.♘b5 a6 26.♘d6 b6 27.♔e2**, getting closer to my targets.

PLAN C

I do not feel that there is any need to lose precious time with my knight. Instead I should proceed like any normal endgame by bringing my king nearer to the centre. This is best done by **24.♔e2 ♔f7 25.♔e3 ♔f6 26.♔d4**, when my advantage will be small but pleasant.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 16

Plan A is the best — see the game.

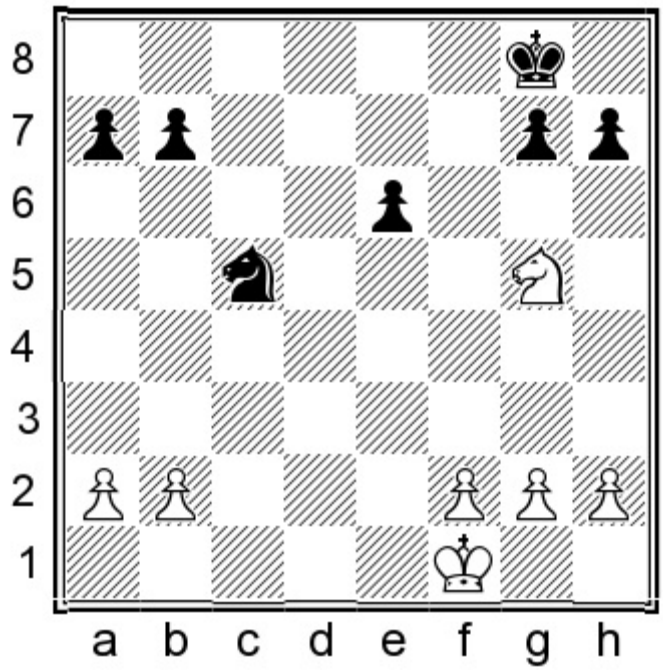
Plan B is not bad but nothing special as well!

Plan C is quite similar to Plan B.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	B	C
50	35	30

24.♘g5! ♘c5?!

Compulsory is 24...e5 25.♔e2 h6 26.♘e4 b6 27.♔d3 ♔f7 28.♔c4 ♔e6 29.♔b5 ♘b8, when White retains the advantage but with no guarantee of victory.



25.b4 ♘a6

The pawn ending resulting from 25...h6? 26.bxc5 hxg5 27.♔e2 ♔f7 28.♔d3 (28.♔f3? ♔f6 29.♔g4 ♔g6 30.f3 e5 31.h3 ♔f6=) 28...e5 (28...♔e7 29.♔e4 ♔d7 30.♔e5 ♔e7 [30...♔c6 31.♔xe6 ♔xc5 32.♔f7 b5 33.♔xg7 a5 34.h4+–] 31.h3 ♔d7 32.f4 gxf4 33.h4+–) 29.♔c4 ♔e6 30.h3, is won for White, as Black will soon end up in zugzwang.

26.a3 ♘c7 27.♔e2 h6

No help is provided by 27...♘b5? 28.a4! ♘c3+ 29.♔d3 ♘xa4 30.♘xe6 ♘b2+ (30...b6 31.♔c2 a5 32.♔b3+–) 31.♔d4 b6 32.b5, when the black a-pawn will be lost.

28.♘e4 ♔f8

28...b6?! 29.♘d6 a6 30.♔d3±, is another option.

29.♘d6 b6 30.♔d3

White proceeds with accuracy. The outwardly attractive 30.♘c8? a5 (30...♘b5? 31.a4 ♘c3+ 32.♔d3 ♘xa4 33.♘xa7 ♘b2+ 34.♔d4 and the black b-pawn is doomed) 31.♔d3 (31.♘xb6?! axb4 32.axb4 ♘a6 33.b5 ♘c7=) 31...axb4 32.axb4 b5! (32...♘d5? 33.♔c4±) 33.♔d4 ♘a6!, would not bring any benefits.

30...a6 31.♘c4 ♘d5

Black has managed to set up a decent defence. White is still better though, thanks to his central control. 31...b5 32.♘e5 ♔e7 33.♔d4 ♔d6 34.f3±.

32.♔d4 ♔e7 33.g3 ♔d7

Interesting is 33...g5 (to prevent 34.f4), but on the other hand every pawn move is weakening. Still, Black should have tried it. Or maybe he could even try 33...♔f6.

34.f4 ♔c6 35.♔e5 ♘c7

The active 35...♔b5? 36.♘b2! (36.♘d6+ ♔a4 37.♔xe6 ♘c3 38.f5 ♔xa3 39.♔f7+–) 36...♘xb4!

37.♔xe6! (37.axb4? ♔xb4 38.♔xe6 a5 39.♔f7 b5 [39...a4? 40.♘xa4!+–] 40.♔xg7 a4 41.♘d3+ ♔c3 42.♘c1 ♔b2 43.f5 ♔xc1 44.f6 a3 45.f7 a2 46.f8=♕ a1=♕+ 47.♔xh6 ♕a6+ 48.♔g5 ♕b6=) 37...♘c6 38.h4+–, loses as well.

36.♘d6 ♔d7!

Or 36...a5? 37.bxa5 bxa5 38.h4 a4 39.h5 ♔d7 40.g4 and It is not clear how Black will escape.

37.f5?

This could through the win away. Much better is 37.♘c4! b5 38.♘a5 ♘d5 39.♘b3±.

37...exf5 38.♘xf5 ♘e8?

Passive. Counterplay is in need: 38...a5! 39.bxa5 bxa5 40.♘xg7 ♘b5 41.a4 ♘c3 42.♘f5 ♘xa4 43.♘xh6 ♘b2, when White cannot win.

39.g4! ♘f6 40.h3

White also wins with 40.♘xh6! ♔c6 41.g5! ♘d7+ 42.♔e6!.

40...h5

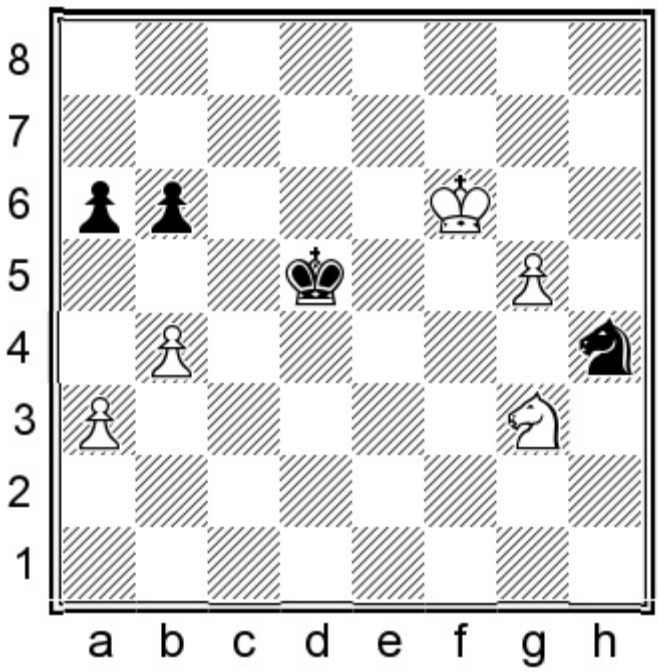
Passive defence with 40...♘e8, is not of a help: 41.a4 ♔c6 42.♘e7+ ♔d7 43.♘d5+–.

41.g5 ♘h7 42.h4 ♘f8

Or 42...g6 43.♘e3 and the white pieces will penetrate.

43.♘xg7 ♘g6+ 44.♔f6 ♘xh4 45.♘xh5 ♔c6 46.♘g3 ♔d5

46...♔b5 47.♘f5 ♘g2 48.♔e5!+–.



47.a4!

Black is in zugzwang and his king must leave the d5-square. Also good is 47.♘f5 ♘g2! 48.♘e7+! (48.g6? ♘f4 49.g7 ♘h5+ 50.♔f7 ♘xg7 51.♔xg7 ♔c4=) 48...♔d6 49.a4 ♘f4 50.♔f5+–.

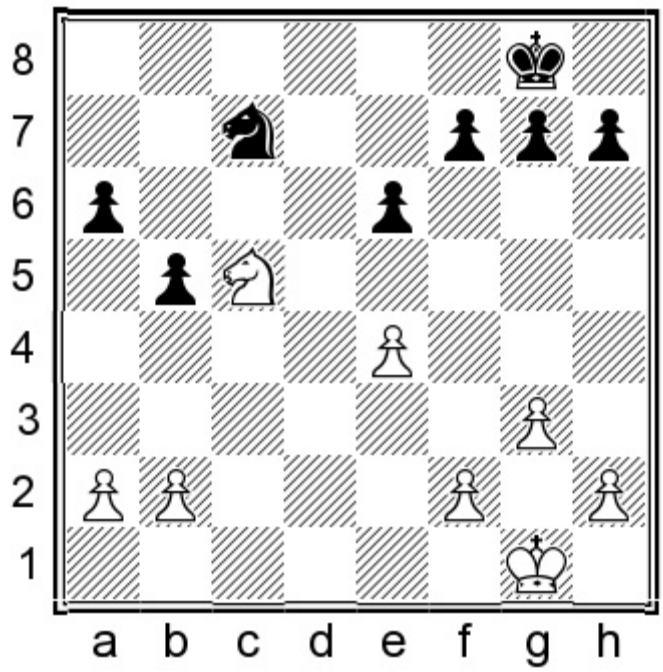
47...b5 48.a5 ♔c4 49.♘f5 ♘g2 50.♔e5!

Centralisation to the end! Black is unable to stop the white g-pawn.

1–0

EXERCISE 17
Andersson Ulf
Sunye Neto Jaime
E03 Brasilia 1981

29...♘c7



EVALUATION

My superiority is a plain fact. Black's queenside pawn structure is weak and my knight is much better placed. My pawn structure is flexible and can more easily occupy the centre, while my king will also be more active than his counterpart.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I can get my king in the centre and then try to penetrate Black's camp by the zugzwang method. So, I can opt for **30.♔f1 ♔f8 31.e5 f6 32.exf6 gxf6 33.♔e2**, when I am in my way.

PLAN B

My kingside pawn structure is quite flexible and I should make use of this asset. I can start by **30.h4 e5 31.h5 h6 32.f4**, when I am applying pressure on all sides of the board and my advantage should increase step by step.

PLAN C

Centre occupation by king or pawns, looks like a good asset here. I can play **30.f4 f6 31.♔f2 ♔f7 32.b4** (fixing the black queenside pawn structure and also preserving the move a3 for a later zugzwang) **32...♔e7 33.♔f3 ♔d6 34.♔g4**, when I should have a pleasant, although not great advantage.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 17

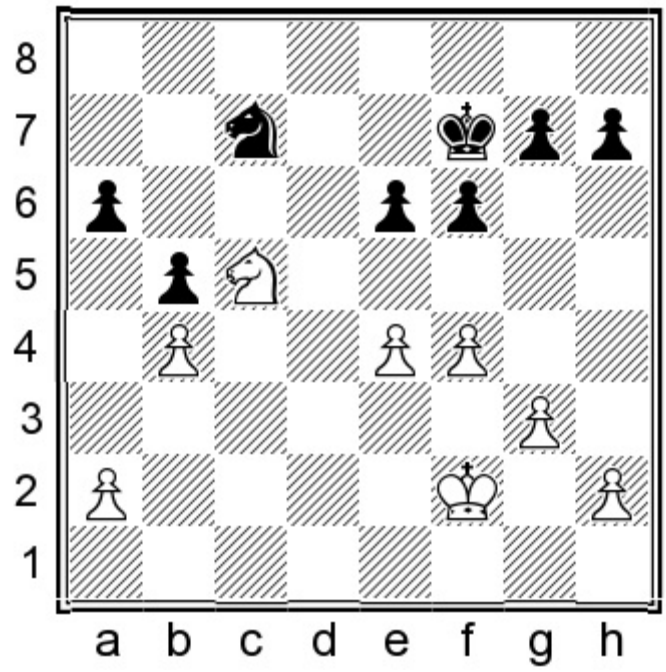
Plan A is a bit slow and not in immediate need.

Plan B is not in the right track.

Plan C is the best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
30	**15**	**50**

30.f4! f6 31.♔f2 ♔f7 32.b4!



32...e5?!

Black should not weaken any more pawns. The passive 32...♔e7 33.♔f3 ♔d6 34.♔g4 g6±, is essential, even if undesirable.

33.♔f3

The immediate 33.fxe5 fxe5 34.♔f3, is also possible, as a fixed pawn structure favours the knights and in end, him!

33...g6

After 33...exf4?! 34.gxf4 (34.♔xf4? ♘e6+) 34...g5 35.♔g4! (35.fxg5? fxg5 36.e5 h5 37.♔e4 ♔g6, with counterplay) 35...♔g6 36.f5+ ♔g7 37.♔h5 (37.e5? fxe5 38.♔xg5 ♘d5=), winning: 37...h6 38.♘e6+! ♘xe6 39.fxe6 ♔f8 40.♔g6 ♔e7 41.♔f5+–.

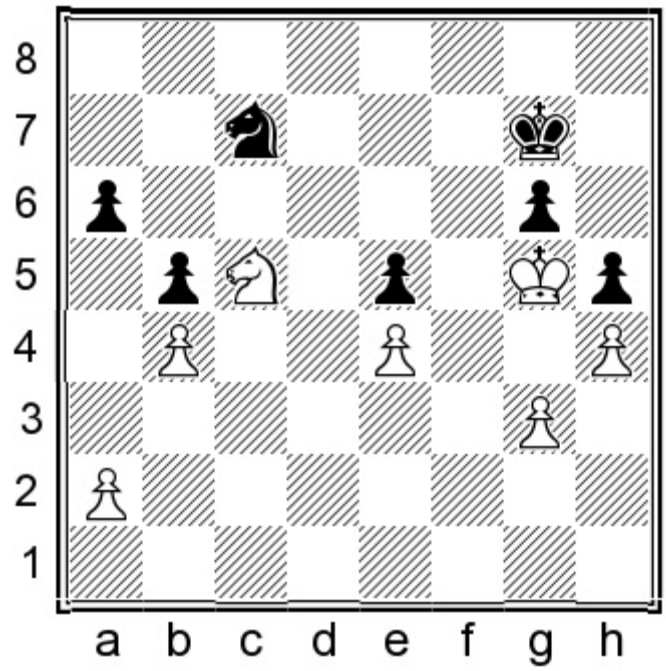
34.fxe5! fxe5 35.♔g4 h6

But not 35...♔f6? 36.♘d7+ ♔e6 37.♘f8++–.

36.h4 h5+

36...♔f6 37.h5 g5 (37...gxh5+ 38.♔xh5 ♔g7 39.♔g4 ♔f6 40.♔h4 ♔g7 41.g4 ♔f6 42.♔h5 ♔g7 43.g5+–) 38.a3!, leads to zugzwang.

37.♔g5 ♔g7



38.g4!

Of course not 38.♘d7? ♘e6#.

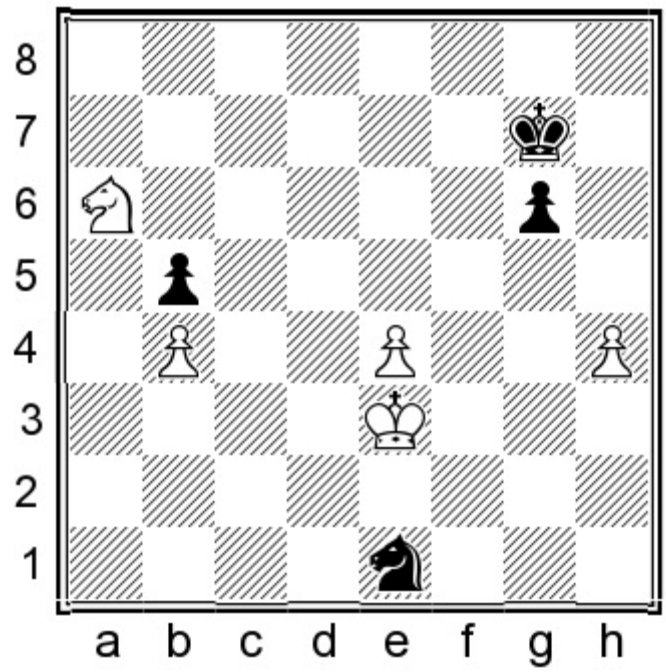
38...hxg4 39.♔xg4 ♔f6 40.a3!

The critical ‘extra’ tempo — Black is in zugzwang.

40...♔f7 41.♔g5 ♔g7 42.♘d7!

White’s victory is now assured.

42...♘e6+ 43.♔g4 ♘d4 44.♘xe5 ♘c2 45.♘d7! ♘xa3 46.♘c5 ♘c4 47.♘xa6 ♘e5+ 48.♔f4 ♘d3+ 49.♔e3 ♘e1



50.e5?!

Accurate is 50.♔d4 ♔f6 51.♔d5+–.

50...♔f7 51.♔e4 ♘g2?!

Black could put-up a fight by 51...♘c2 52.♔f4 ♘e1 53.♘c7 ♘d3+ 54.♔e4 ♘xb4 55.♘xb5±.

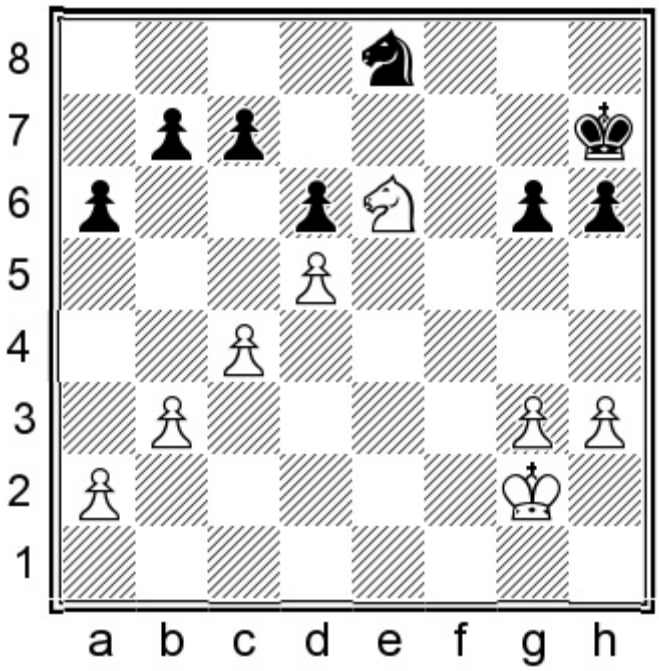
52.♘c7 ♘xh4 53.♘xb5 ♘f5 54.♘d4 ♘e7 55.b5 ♘c8 56.♔d5 g5 57.♔c5

Black resigned in view of the following line: 57...g4 58.b6 ♘xb6 59.♔xb6 g3 60.♔c5 g2 61.♘e2 ♔e6 62.♔d4.

1–0

EXERCISE 18
Huebner Robert
Grivas Efstratios
E62 Pula 1997

32...♘e8



EVALUATION

My advantage looks already huge. My pawn structure is better and much more flexible, while my knight looks like a monster compared to his passive and miserable counterpart. I need to improve the position of my king and proceed with a breakthrough on the queenside, cashing the point.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I think that it is especially important to immobilise the weak black a6-b7 pawn structure. For this I will opt for **33.b4 b6 34.♔f3 ♔g8 35.a4 ♔f7**, after which I can play **36.♘d8+! ♔e7** (**36...♔f6 37.♘c6**,

intending a5, would also win) **37.♘c6+ ♔d7 38.a5**, gaining a decisive advantage.

PLAN B

Natural would be to proceed on my king's centralisation and then to see how I will advance my queenside pawns. So, good seems to be **33.♔f3 g5 34.♔e4 ♔g6** and now **35.b4**, should give me a huge advantage.

PLAN C

A good idea is to restrict both opponent pieces in their last ranks and for this I can opt for advancing my kingside pawns by **33.h4 ♔g8 34.g4 b6 35.g5**, when my idea is completed. Centralisation of my king and a breakthrough on the queenside will follow.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 18

Plan A is the best — see the game.

Plan B is wrong as **33...a5!**, would give Black serious hope for survival.

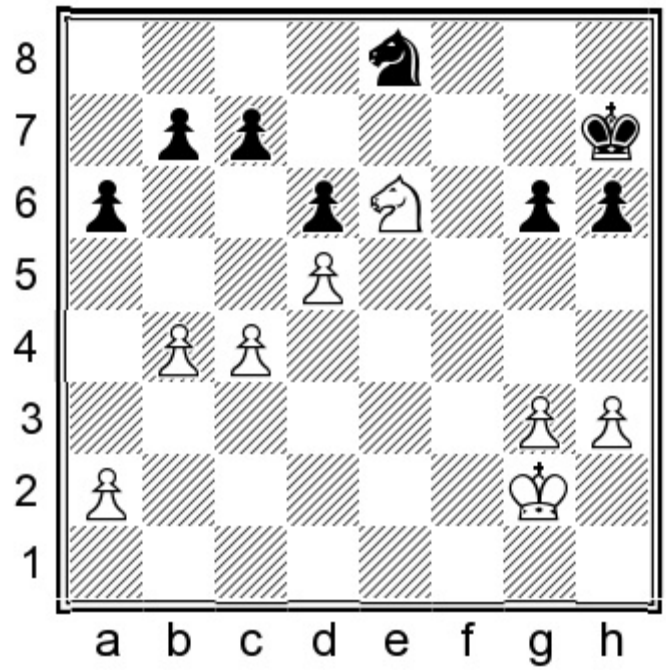
Plan C is not bad, but not as strong as Plan A.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	B	C
50	15	40

33.b4!

It is especially important to immobilise the weak a6-b7 pawn structure. The careless 33.♔f3?! a5, would give Black serious hope for survival.

33.b4!



33...b6 34.♔f3 ♔g8 35.a4 ♔f7 36.♘d8+! ♔e7

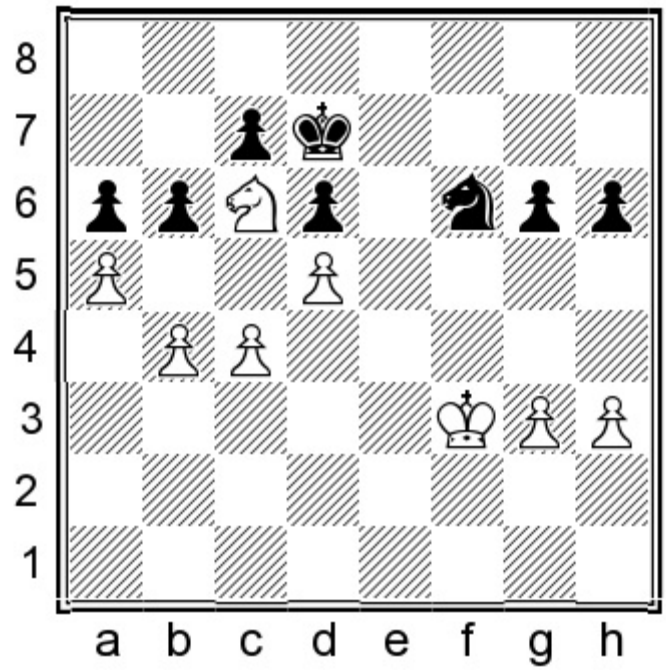
36...♔f6 37.♘c6, intending a5, would also win for White.

37.♘c6+ ♔d7 38.a5!

Clearly better than 38.♘b8+ ♔c8 39.♘xa6? ♔b7 40.b5 ♘f6, when Black has some survival chances.

38...♘f6

Or 38...♔c8 39.♘e7+.



39.b5! axb5

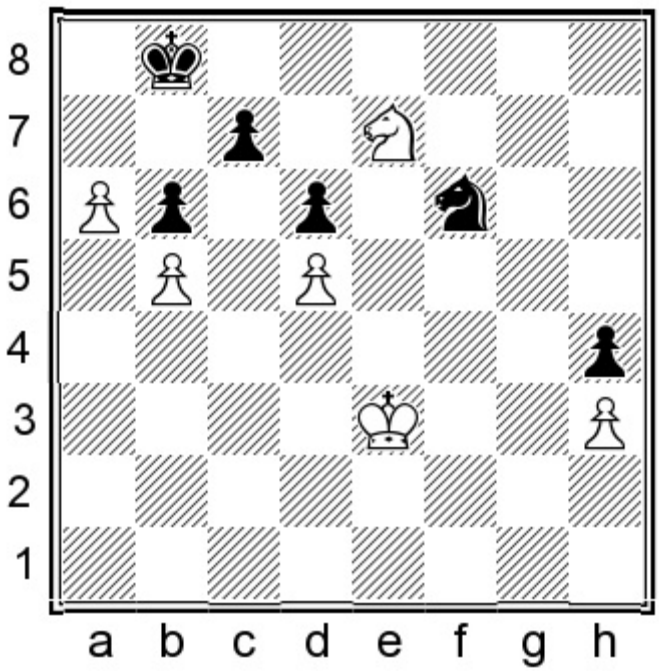
Unfortunately, 39...bxa5 40.bxa6 ♔c8 41.♘xa5 ♔b8 42.♘c6+ ♔a8 43.♘e7! g5 44.♘c6, also fails to

help Black.

40.a6 ♔c8 41.♘e7+ ♔b8 42.cxb5 g5 43.♔e3 h5

Black has no defence anymore: 43...♔a8 44.♔d4 ♔b8 45.♘f5 h5 (45...♘g8 46.♘e3 ♘f6 47.♘g4 ♘g8 48.♔e4) 46.♘e7 ♔a8 47.♔e3 ♔b8 48.h4.

44.♔d4 h4 45.gxh4 gxh4 46.♔e3



1–0

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GOOD BISHOP VS BAD KNIGHT

The strategic advantage of a better (good) bishop vs an inferior (bad) knight is determined by the pawn structure. More specifically, the bishop is superior to the knight when no pawns exist in the centre but, at the same time, there are pawns on both flanks.

It is also beneficial to the bishop if the opponent's pawns are placed on squares of the same colour as that on which it moves, since it can then attack them.

Accordingly, it is preferable that fellow pawns are placed on squares of the opposite colour.

In some cases (exceptions) it is possible to demonstrate the superiority of the bishop also in positions with central pawns, provided that these pawns do not obstruct the bishop; i.e. that the bishop's own pawns are placed on squares of the opposite colour and the enemy pawns on squares of the same colour as the bishop.

The superiority of the bishop over the knight can be utilised in two main situations:

SOS Tip 1 — Types of Superiority

1. In the middlegame: the bishop can support an attack against the opponent's king or on any other part of the board.
2. In the endgame: the bishop — thanks to its ability to control a lot of squares from a distance — proves powerful, particularly when both sides have passed pawns. The bishop is also able to 'gain' (or 'lose') a tempo, i.e. to force the enemy knight into zugzwang; this aspect is decisive in most endgames.

In most positions that are favourable for the bishop, the possession of the prelate does not guarantee victory, but is a useful weapon in the fight for it.

The bishop is a long-range piece and likes play on both wings and open positions. Its main disadvantage is that it can only visit half of the squares on the board.

The side with the bishop should therefore generally place his pawns on squares of the opposite colour.

So, it is entirely logical that in open positions the superiority of the bishop over the knight will be conclusively proven.

Endings without central and blocked pawns and with pawns on both flanks favour the bishop, as it controls more squares than the knight.

The power of the bishop becomes evident in the following cases:

SOS Tip 2 — Bishop Power

1. Pawns on both flanks. The bishop can control more squares from afar.
2. Enemy pawns on squares of the opposite colour than that on which the bishop moves. The bishop has increased mobility.
3. Weak pawn structure. The bishop can attack the pawns or assist his king to invade.
4. Mobile pawn structure or centre. The bishop can increase its activity and has the possibility of attacking multiple targets all over the board.

Also, we must keep in mind that, when fighting against a knight, the bishop can use zugzwang and the corralling motif.

Chess dogmatism does not occur only when:

SOS Tip 3 — Dogmatic Rules

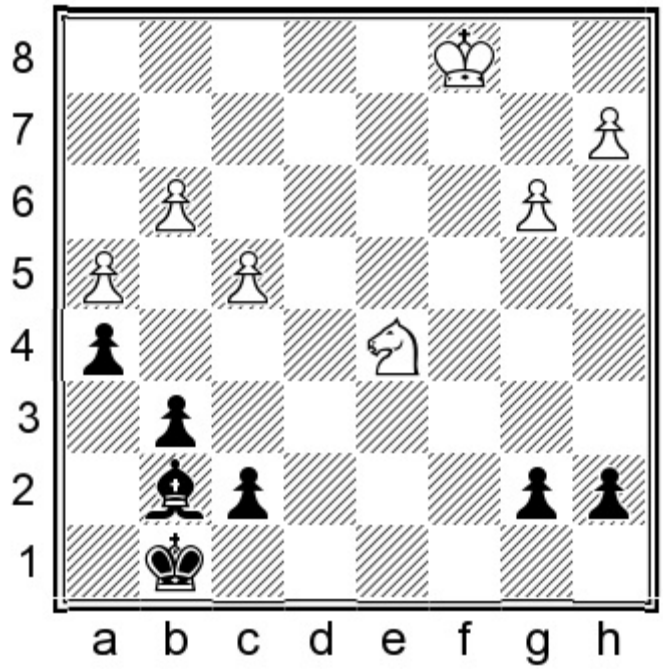
1. Established rules are followed without regard for circumstances of the position.
2. The evaluation of a particular position is made primarily on the basis of only the obvious, the already known and established rules and generalisations.

Keep in mind that the dynamic approach characteristic of modern chess has in effect made general rules and principles 'useless' for the purpose of making decisions in the majority of concrete positions.

Of course, a thorough acquaintance with the general principles, techniques and methods, enriches and sharpens our intuition, but still every position is rather unique and it should be examined like that.

EXERCISE 19
Korchnoi Viktor
McShane Luke
D70 Igualada 2005

36.♔xc1



EVALUATION

So, by great efforts my opponent has managed to liquidate into an endgame. However, I preserve a serious advantage as the bishop (in principle) is stronger than the knight in such open positions, with pawns on both sides; besides, my opponent's kingside pawns, fixed on the squares of my bishop, are a serious weakness — a consequence of my wise 19...h5 move! The only 'problem' is that my opponent has no permanent weakness.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

The primary thought in nearly every endgame is to get the king centralised and here there shouldn't be any exception. The most natural should be to go for **36...♔f8 37.♔d2 ♔e8 38.♔e3 ♔d7** and then to activate my bishop attacking the weak white kingside pawns.

PLAN B

Centralising the king is of course welcomed and in the spirit of every endgame, but fixing the weaknesses is also highly important. For this I will opt for **36...f5**, making sure that my opponent will not get rid of his weaknesses and only then I will activate my king with **37.♔d2 ♔f7 38.♔d3 ♔e6**.

PLAN C

Weaknesses cannot wait to be attacked! For this I will start with **36...♗d4 37.♔d2 ♔f8** (**37...♗f2**, is premature due to **38.♘f6+ ♔f8 39.♘e4**) **38.♔e2 f5** and I am on the right track for both centralise my king and attack my opponent's weaknesses.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 19

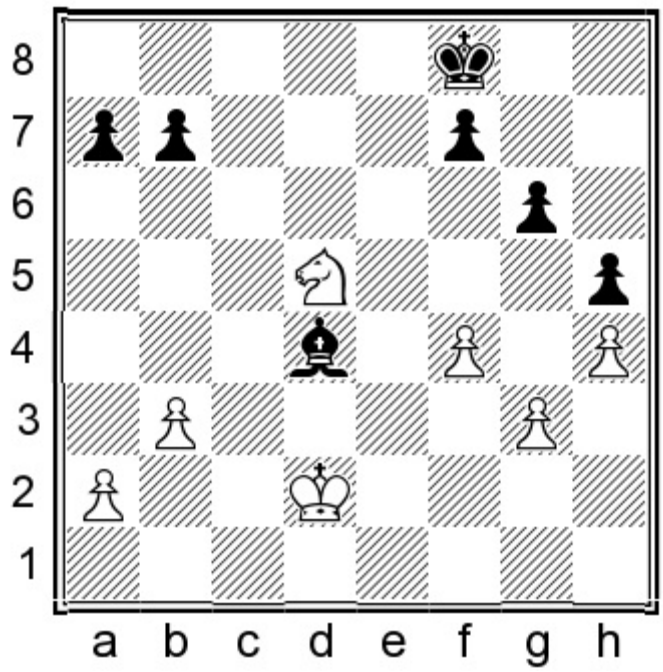
Plan A is not bad, although White might create some play with **39.f5!**.

Plan B is not the best. After **39.♔c4**, is not clear how Black will improve his position, as he has no entry via f5 to the kingside.

Plan C is best and natural — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**

36...♗d4 37.♔d2 ♔f8



38.♘e3?!

Going into a pawn endgame is risky business for White, as Black has three pawns on the 7th rank (and can choose between a single and double move, to set up a zugzwang for White) — as pointed out by William Steinitz in the 19th century! However, a centralised king secures him a draw in this case. But still, the text move is a mistake anyway, as White had a better solution at his disposal: 38.♔e2! f5 (38...♔e8 39.f5 gxf5 40.♘f4=) 39.♘e3 ♔f7 40.♘c2 ♗c5 41.♘e1 ♔e6 42.♘f3 ♔d5 (42...♗d6 43.♘g5+ ♔d5 44.♘f7, with the idea ♘h8xg6, is also far from clear) 43.♘e5 ♔d4 44.♘xg6 ♔c3 45.♘e5 b5 46.♘f7! ♗f8 (46...♔b2 47.♘h6 ♔xa2 48.♘xf5 ♔xb3 [48...a5 49.g4 hxg4 50.h5 a4 51.bxa4 b4 52.h6 b3 53.h7 b2 54.h8=♕ b1=♕ 55.♕g8+=] 49.g4 hxg4 50.h5=) 47.♘d8, when he gets counterplay.

38...♔e7 39.♔d3 ♗c5

39...♗xe3?, is equal after 40.♔xe3 ♔f6 (40...♔e6 41.♔e4 b5 42.b4 a6?! 43.f5+ gxf5+ 44.♔f4 ♔f6 45.a3=) 41.♔e4 ♔e6 42.b4 b5 (otherwise 43.a4) 43.♔d4 ♔f5 44.♔c5! ♔g4 45.♔xb5 ♔xg3 46.♔a6.

40.♔e4?

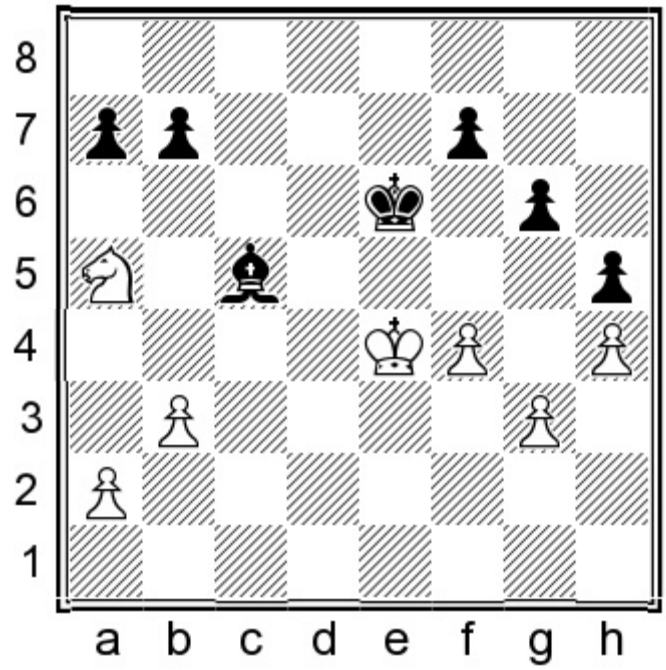
Again, 40.b4 ♗d6 (40...♗xe3? 41.♔xe3 ♔e6 42.♔e4 b5 43.♔d4 ♔f5 44.♔c5 ♔g4 45.♔xb5 ♔xg3 46.♔a6 ♔xh4 47.♔xa7 ♔g4 48.b5 h4 49.b6 h3 50.b7 h2 51.b8=♕ h1=♕ 52.a4=) 41.a4, seems best. The idea to keep Black's king and bishop locked out is not easy to counter. Again there are some doubts as to whether Black is winning.

40...♔f6 41.♘c4

Now it is too late for 41.b4 ♗xe3 42.♔xe3 ♔f5, although it is not that easy: 43.b5 ♔g4 44.♔f2 a6!

(44...♔h3?! 45.♔f3 a6 46.b6 a5 47.a4 f5 48.♔f2 ♔h2 49.♔f3 ♔g1 50.♔e3 ♔g2 51.♔d4 ♔xg3 52.♔e5 ♔xh4 53.♔d6 ♔g4 54.♔c7 h4 55.♔xb7 h3 56.♔a6 h2 57.b7 h1=♕ 58.b8=♕ ♕f1+ 59.♔xa5 ♕xf4–+) 45.a4 axb5 46.axb5 ♔h3 47.♔f3 f6 48.♔f2 b6 49.♔f3 f5 50.♔f2 ♔h2 51.♔f3 ♔g1 52.♔e3 ♔g2 53.♔d4 ♔xg3 54.♔d5 ♔xh4 55.♔c6 g5 56.fxg5 ♔xg5 57.♔xb6 h4 58.♔c5 h3 59.b6 h2 60.b7 h1=♕ 61.b8=♕ ♕c1+ 62.♔d5 ♕d2+ 63.♔c6 ♕c3+ 64.♔d5 ♕d3+ 65.♔c5 f4–+.

41...♔e6 42.♘a5



42.♘e3 ♗xe3 43.♔xe3 ♔f5 (43...♔d5? 44.f5!) 44.♔f3 a5 45.a4 b6 46.♔e3 ♔g4 47.♔f2 ♔h3 48.♔f3 f5–+ or 42.a4 f5+ 43.♔f3 ♔d5–+.

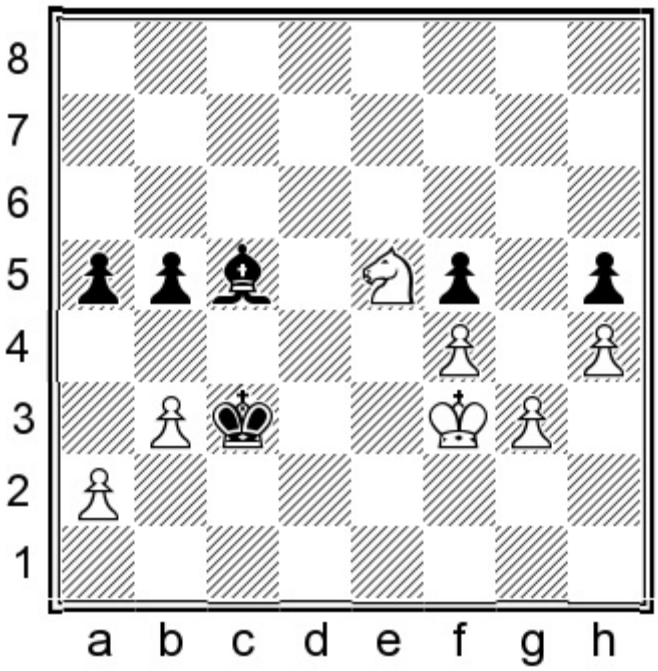
42...f5+! 43.♔f3 b5

Good enough was 43...♔d5 44.♘xb7 ♗b6 45.b4 ♔c6 46.♘a5+ ♔b5–+.

44.♘c6 ♔d5!

The right decision. The black king goes to the queenside to collect the white pawns. White captures the g6 pawn but has neither time nor possibility to create his own passed pawn.

45.♘e5 ♔d4 46.♘xg6 ♔c3 47.♘e5 a5



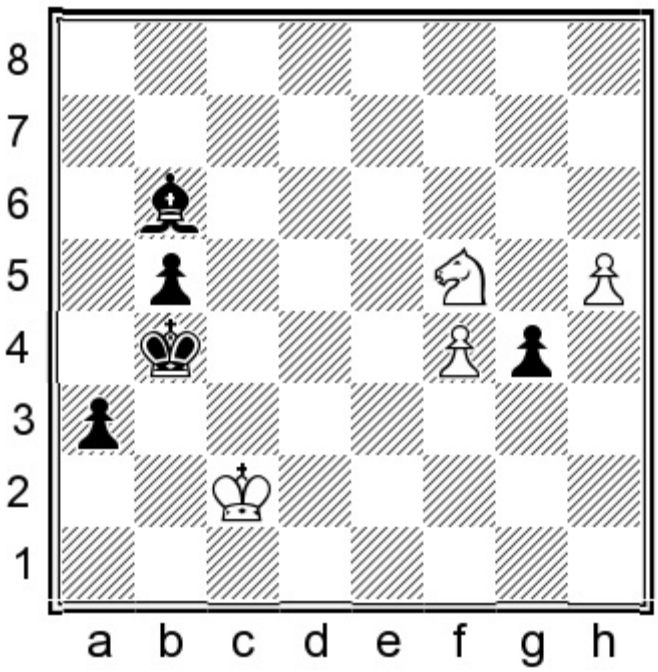
48.♔e2

48.♘c6, was more tenacious, although it should not save the game: 48...a4 49.bxa4 bxa4 50.♔e2 (50.♘e5 ♗d4 51.♘c6 ♗f6 52.♔e3 ♔b2 53.♘b4 ♔a3 54.♘d5 ♔xa2 55.♘xf6 a3 56.♘d5 ♔b3 57.♔d4 a2 58.♔e5 a1=♕+ 59.♔xf5 ♕e1–+) 50...♔b2 51.♔d3 ♔xa2 52.♔c2 ♔a3 (52...♗f2? 53.♘e7 ♗xg3 54.♘xf5 ♗xf4 55.♘e7=) 53.♔c3 ♗f2 54.♘e7 ♗e1+ 55.♔c2 ♗xg3 56.♘xf5 ♗xf4 57.♘e7 ♗g3 58.♘d5 ♗xh4 59.♘c3 ♗f6 60.♘xa4 h4! 61.♘c5 h3 62.♘e4 ♗h4–+.

48...♗b6 49.♘c6

Or 49.♘d3 ♗a7–+. An amazing position. White is a pawn up but totally lost!

49...♔b2 50.b4 a4 51.♔d3 ♔xa2 52.♔c2 ♔a3 53.♘e7 ♔xb4 54.♘xf5 a3 55.g4 hxg4 56.h5



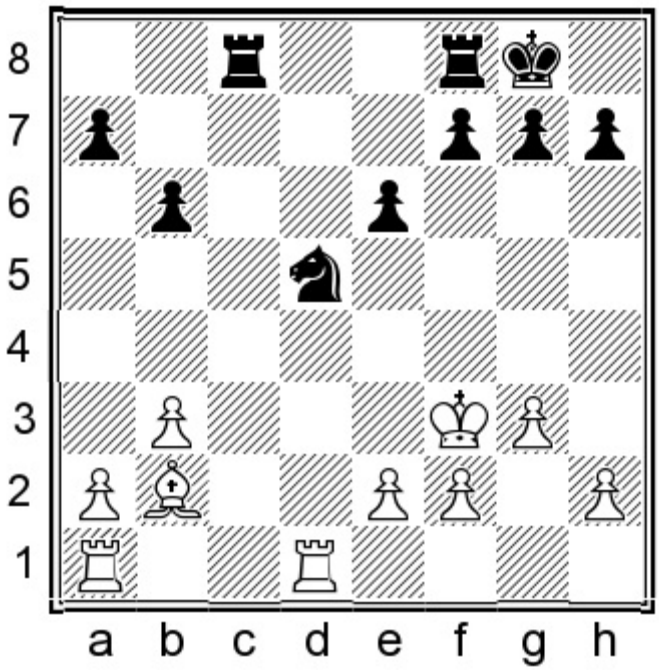
56...g3!

Black resigned due to 57.♘xg3 ♗d4, or 57.h6 a2 58.♔b2 g2 59.h7 a1=♕+ 60.♔xa1 ♔b3 61.h8=♕ g1=♕#.

0–1

EXERCISE 20
Grivas Efstratios
Khetsuriani Besarion
E19 Athens 2003

20...♘d5



EVALUATION

I have gladly accepted the exchanges offered by my opponent, ending up in a pleasant endgame where I have four basic assets on which to build: better minor piece (bishop vs knight), taking the pawn structure into account, better-placed king (centralised), in contrast to the enemy monarch who will have difficulties in occupying a satisfactory position, either active or passive, possibility of a white rook invading Black's camp and good prospects of further improving my position, while Black can only sit and wait.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Restriction of the opponent pieces is mostly welcomed. The black knight is centralised, so it should be kicked away by **21.e4 ♘e7**, when I can go for **22.♗a3**, or **22.♖d7**, increasing my pressure to the black position. Black cannot find counterplay, so he is condemned to passivity.

PLAN B

There is no need to make pawn 'commitments' as **21.e4**, in a so early phase. More important is to challenge the c-file by **21.♖ac1**, with the idea ♖c4 and ♖dc1. If my opponent capture on c4 (after my ♖c4 move), then after bxc4 his knight will be kicked away and I will be able to penetrate in his camp.

PLAN C

Of course I would like to kick the centralised black knight away, but I feel that it is too early for it. I should firstly double my rooks on the d-file, starting with **21.♖d2** and ♖ad1. This idea also protects my 2nd rank against a potential black rook invasion.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 20

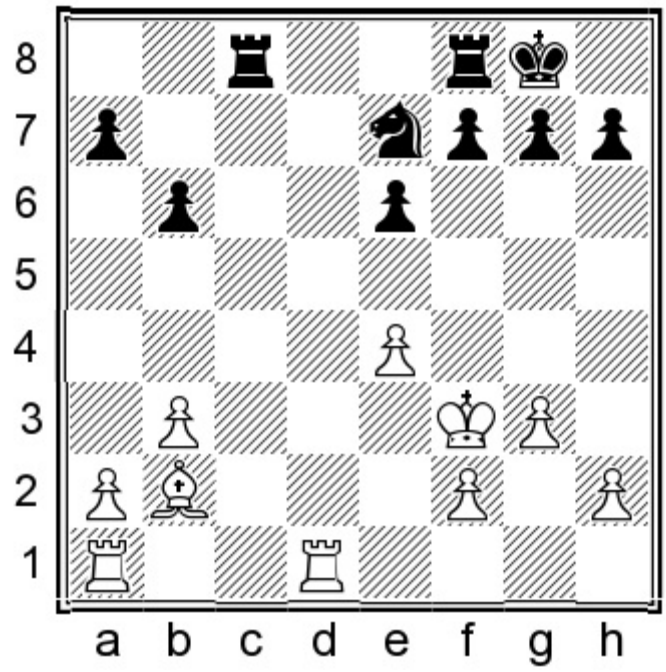
Plan A is best — see the game.

Plan B is not helping White, as after **21...f5!**, the centralised black knight offers good services to its owner.

Plan C is similar to Plan B; Black will again go for **21...f5!**, and even if White succeed to play e4 (after e3, ♔e2 and f3), Black will always have counterplay.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**20**	**20**

21.e4! ♘e7



22.♗a3

22.♖d7 ♘c6 23.♔e3 (23.♖c1? ♘e5+!) 23...♖fd8, is interesting and similar to the game.

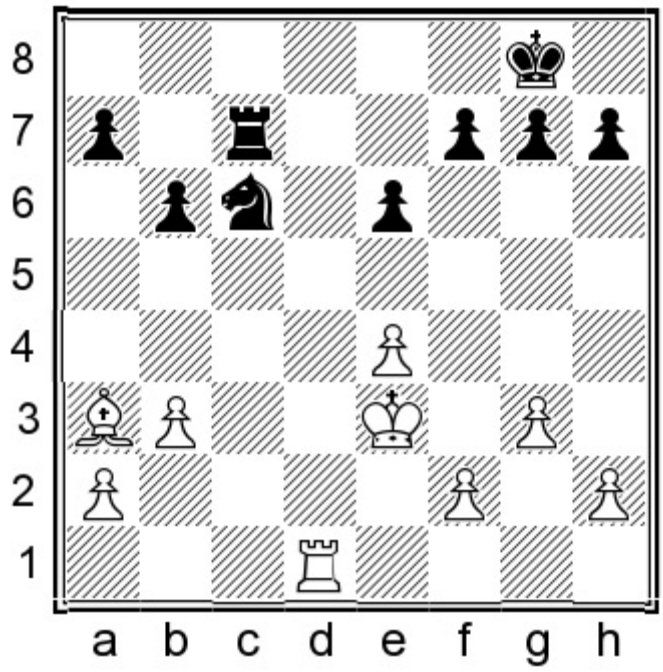
22...♖fe8 23.♖ac1!

The exchange of one pair of rooks will enable the white king to breathe more freely and will further highlight the weak points in Black's position, as the remaining black pieces will have to take on greater defensive duties. Naturally, 23.♖d7?! ♘c6! 24.♔e3 ♘e5!, would only help Black.

23...♖xc1 24.♖xc1 ♖c8 25.♖d1!

The exchange of rooks would now be in Black's favour, as then White would surrender one of his aforementioned advantages, the possibility of invading Black's lines with his rook.

25...♘c6 26.♔e3 ♖c7



27.e5!

An apparently illogical move, placing the pawn on a square of the same colour as the bishop. However, this move essentially prevents the activation of the black king, who now cannot approach the centre unless Black decides to accept further pawn weaknesses. If Black waits passively then White will continue with f4, g4, ♖d6, ♔e4 and f5, gaining even more space and developing substantial pressure on Black's position.

27...f5 28.exf6 gxf6 29.♖c1 ♔f7 30.♖c4!

Now the white rook can swing to either side of the board. Working together with the strong bishop, it will create multiple problems for Black. The black king has improved its placement but Black's pawn structure has deteriorated with the emergence of weak pawns.

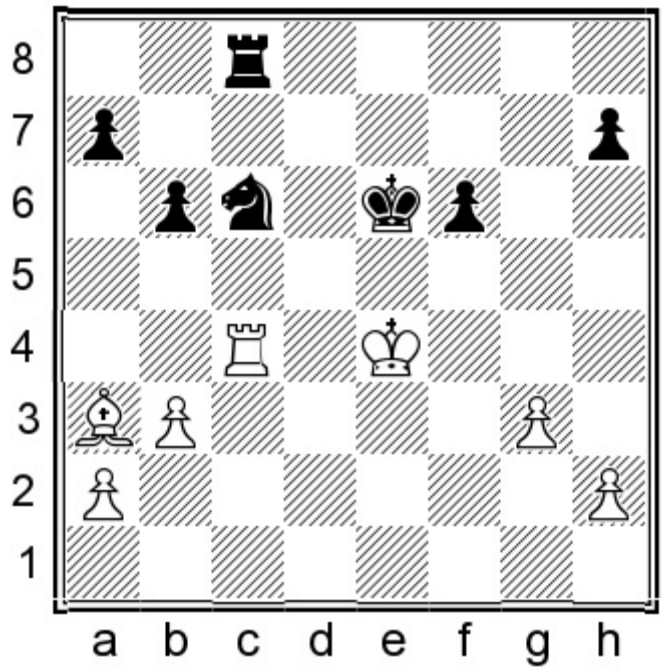
30...e5?!

Black should have stayed passive, without exposing himself with pointless pawn moves that, although seemingly strong, actually create new targets.

31.f4!

With the idea to isolate one more black pawn (apart from h7) on e5 or f6. Black wisely opts for the latter, since if he were left with a pawn on e5, then all pawn endings would be lost, due to the possibility of White creating an outside passed pawn.

31...exf4+ 32.♔xf4 ♔e6 33.♗b2 ♖c8 34.♗a3 ♖c7 35.♔e4 ♖c8



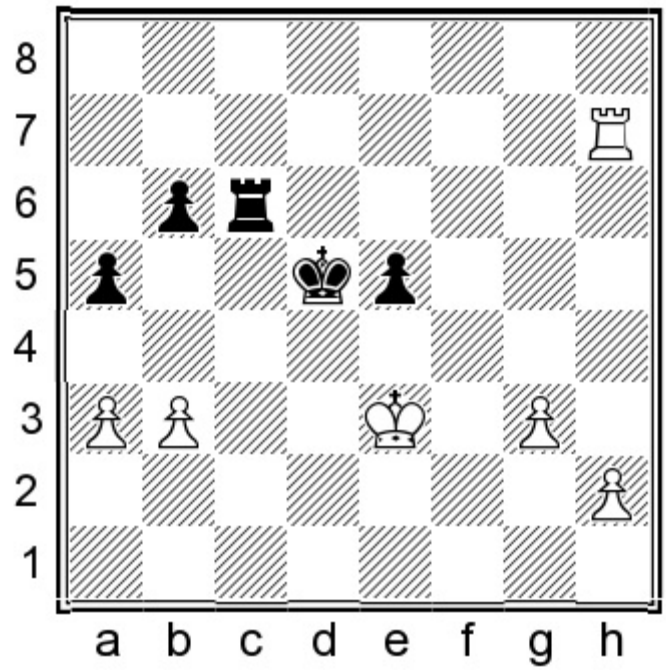
36.♔e3

White has played some waiting moves to gain time and now prepares to increase the pressure with ♖h4-h6 and ♗b2. After the black pieces are tied to the protection of the kingside pawns, the white king will invade the queenside. A simple plan, but one that is very difficult for Black to oppose.

36...♔d5 37.♗b2 ♖e8+ 38.♔d3 ♖e6?

Black's position was difficult, but with this move he loses material. He should objectively have preferred the passive 38...♖f8 39.♖h4 ♖f7 40.♔e3 ♘e5 41.♖h5, with advantage for White. It should be noted that Black cannot play 38...♘e5+? 39.♗xe5 ♖xe5 (39...fxe5 40.♖c7 e4+ 41.♔e3) 40.♖c7 ♖h5 41.h4 a5 42.♖b7 ♔c6 43.♖f7 ♖h6 44.♔e4, when White's superiority is more than obvious and Black's chances of survival minimal.

39.♖h4 a5 40.a3! ♘e5+ 41.♗xe5 fxe5 42.♖xh7 ♖f6 43.♔e3 ♖c6



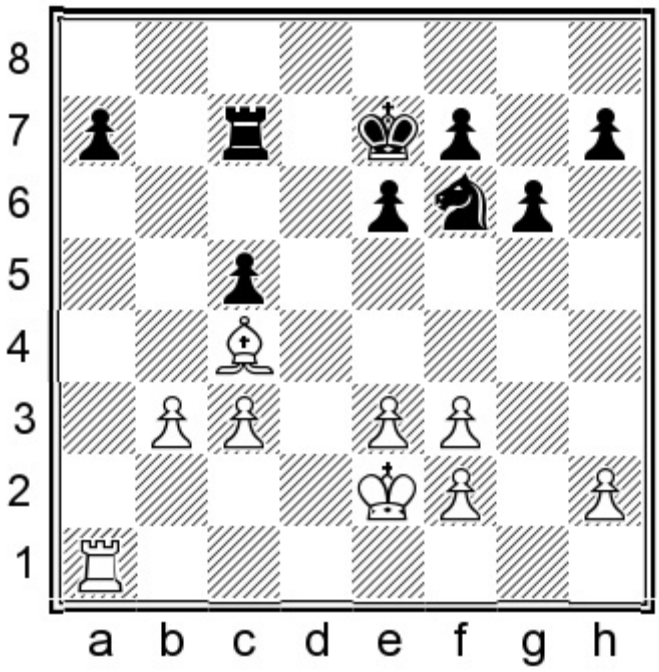
44.♖d7+!

The game is practically over as White has won material and is able to protect his position.

44...♔e6 45.♖d3 ♔f5 46.h3 ♖h6 47.g4+ ♔e6 48.♔e4 ♖f6 49.♖f3 1–0

EXERCISE 21
Grivas Efstratios
Avrukh Boris
D91 Iraklion 1995

26...♔e7



EVALUATION

My position is better. I have bishop against knight (with an accordingly favourable pawn structure) and the black pawns are either weak (a7 and c5) or placed on the same colour squares as my bishop. My doubled f-pawns cannot be considered weak as Black has no way of attacking them, while they offer good control of the centre. What is certain is that Black has a difficult task ahead as, beyond his defensive duties to which he must pay constant attention, he can never generate any real threats. But what plans can I use for increasing my superiority? Pawn breaks on both flanks, aiming to facilitate the invasion by the white rook in Black's camp and at the same time to increase the scope of the bishop. Subsequently, the invasion by the white king will be decisive. It seems easy, but heightened attention and good feeling for the critical moment are required.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Increasing the superiority of my bishop is a primary concept, so I should prepare an f5 break, starting with **27.f4** and then f3, e4 and ♔e3.

PLAN B

My bishop should be free to operate on the kingside, so I should move my king to the queenside, protecting my pawns. Then my bishop will operate on the kingside, going for the f4 and h4-h5 advances. So, I will opt for **27.♔d2 ♘d7 28.♔c2 ♘b6 29.♗e2 ♔d6 30.f4 ♔e7 31.h4**.

PLAN C

It is essential to restrict the opponent pieces, so I will opt for **27.e4**, planning ♔e3, f4, with full central control. Then I will decide if I will go for a direct f5 advance.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 21

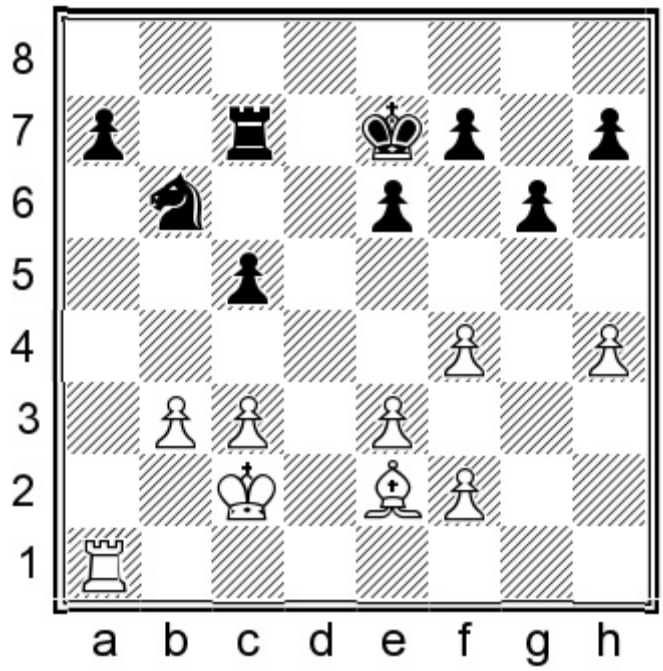
Plan A is only giving Black counterplay after **27...♘e4! 28.♖c1 ♖d7 29.♖c2 ♘d6**.

Plan B is best — see the game.

Plan C is bad, as after **27...e5!**, Black will go for **...**♘h5-f4, with a great position.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
15	**50**	**0**

27.♔d2 ♘d7 28.♔c2 ♘b6 29.♗e2 ♔d6 30.f4 ♔e7 31.h4!



31...♔d6

After 31...h5, White will prepare a break with f5 (e4 and f5), creating a target on g6.

32.h5 ♔e7 33.♗f3 ♔d6 34.c4!

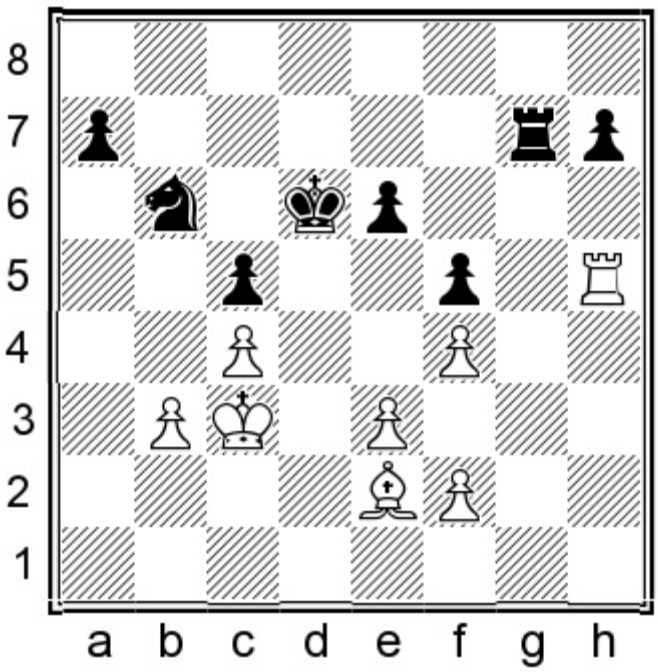
Control of the centre is important, while the c4-pawn later becomes a passed pawn candidate with the

help of the b4 break.

34...♔e7 35.♔c3 ♔d6 36.♗e2 gxh5?!

This weakens Black's pawn structure, but he couldn't stand staying passive any longer. 36...♔e7, was a natural move.

37.♖h1 f5 38.♖xh5 ♖g7



39.b4!

Yet another pawn break, aiming to turn c4 into a passed pawn.

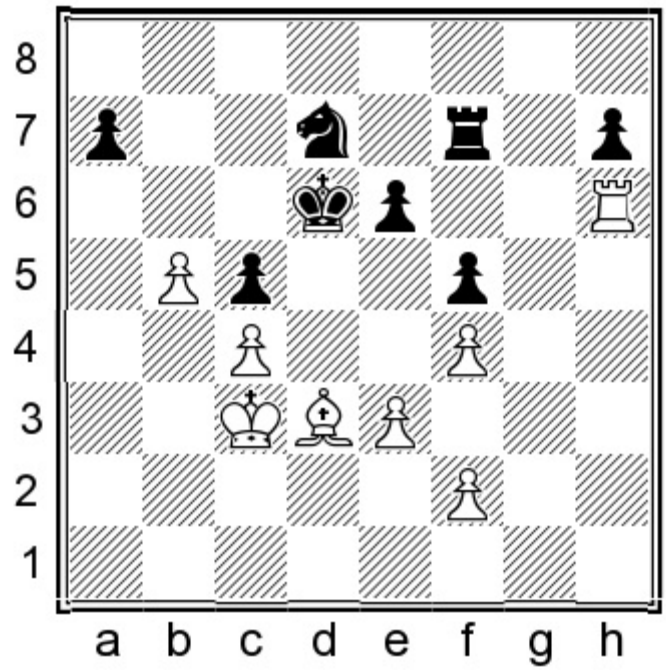
39...♖b7

After 39...cxb4+ 40.♔xb4 ♘d7 41.♗f3 ♘c5 42.♖h1!, Black faces serious problems (42...♘d3+ 43.♔b5!) as the white passed pawn proves powerful.

40.b5!

Forced, as 40.bxc5+?! ♔xc5, threatening 41...♘a4+, would be good only for Black. White 'forgets' about the plan of utilising the passed c-pawn but in return fixes the backward weak a7-pawn. His superiority is increasing.

40...♖g7 41.♗d3 ♘d7 42.♖h6 ♖f7



43.f3!

Preparing White's next break, the e4 advance. The relocation of the white king to its rightful flank is part of these preparations.

43...♔e7 44.♖h1 ♘b6 45.♖h4 ♘d7 46.♖h2 ♘b6 47.♔d2 ♘d7 48.♔e2 ♔f8 49.♖h6 ♔e7 50.♖h1 ♘b6 51.♖h5 ♘d7 52.♖h4 ♖g7 53.e4! fxe4 54.♗xe4!

Excellent and at the same time logical. After 54.fxe4? e5!, the d3-bishop would be nothing more than a big fat pawn. White aims to exchange his f-pawn for Black's e-pawn so as to obtain a passed pawn; this pawn will be much stronger than Black's on the h-file and, in conjunction with the bishop and the king, will lead White to victory. Black can offer no resistance.

54...♘f6 55.♔f2 ♔d8

After 55...♘xe4+ 56.fxe4 ♔d6 57.♖h6 ♔e7 58.♔f3 ♔f7 59.f5 exf5 60.exf5, the threats 61.♖c6, 61.♖a6 and 61.♔e4 followed by ♔d5, would be decisive.

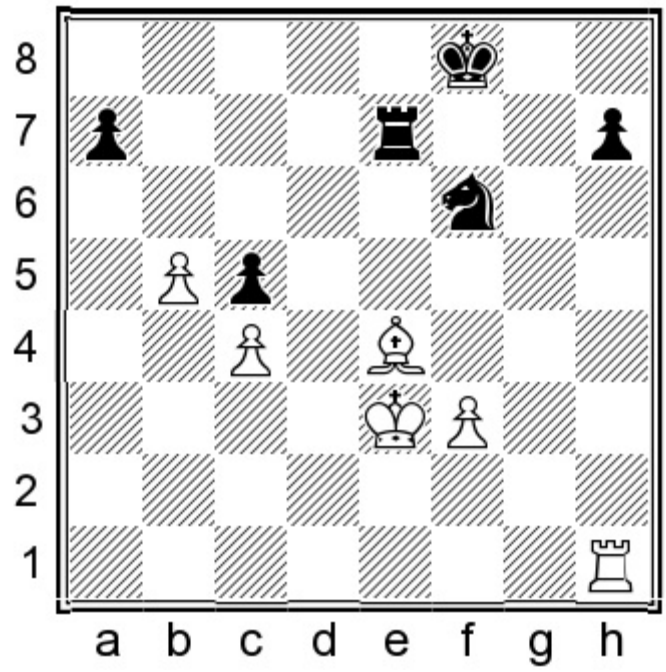
56.♖h6 ♖f7 57.♔e3 ♔e8 58.f5!

The last breakthrough, clearing White's path to victory.

58...exf5

58...♘xe4? 59.♖xe6+!, is easy for White, but Black could have tried; 58...e5, when after 59.♖h4! ♔e7 60.♗c6, intending 61.f4, White retains his advantage.

59.♗xf5 ♔e7 60.♗d3 ♔f8 61.♖h1 ♖e7+ 62.♔f2 ♖d7 63.♔e3 ♖e7+ 64.♗e4!



64...♖c7

Also after 64...♘xe4 65.fxe4, White's threats (66.♖h5 and 66.♔f4) are powerful.

If, however the b-pawn were still on b3, Black would have counterplay with 65...♖b7!. Here the significance of White's b4-b5 advance becomes clear.

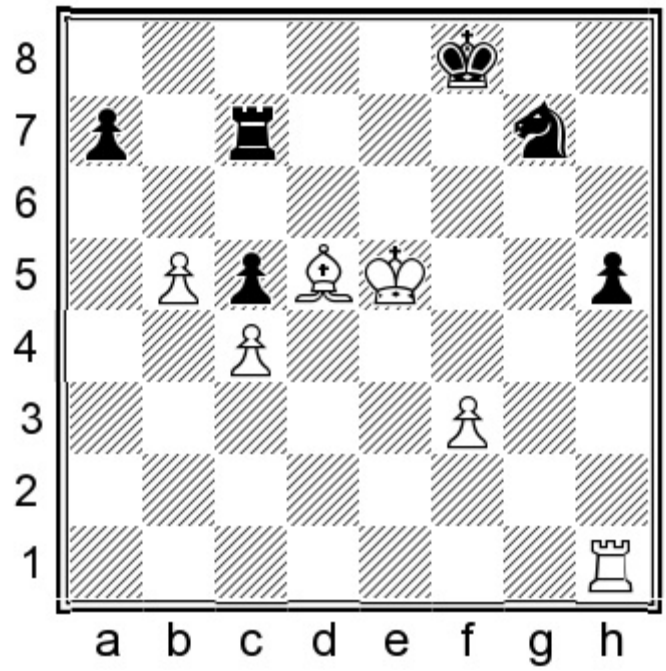
65.♔f4 h5 66.♔f5 ♖f7 67.♔e6

The white king proves exceptionally strong and completes the plan laid out in the note to Black's 26th move.

67...♘e8 68.♔e5 ♖e7+ 69.♔f4

69.♔d5, was also winning, but White can even afford the luxury of the text move.

69...♘g7 70.♗d5 ♖c7 71.♔e5

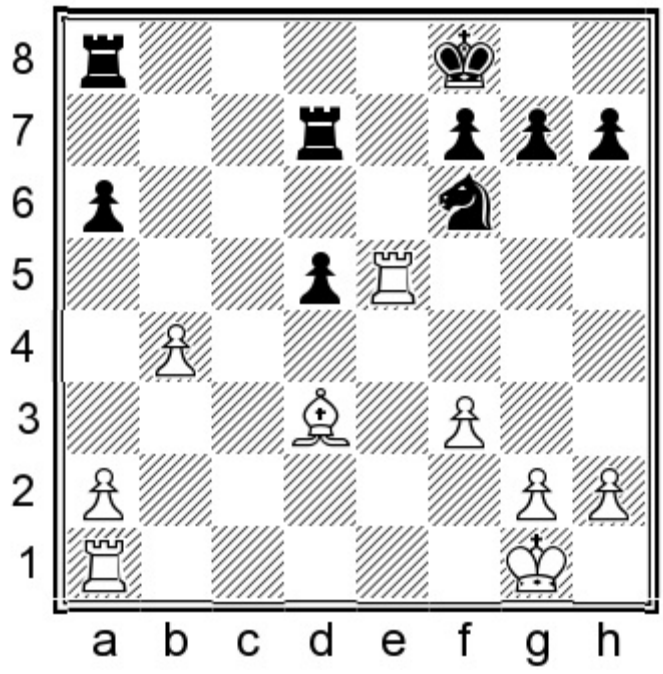


Black is now completely lost as the d5-bishop is clearly stronger than the g7-knight, the white king is dominant and the white rook is also better placed than its counterpart. Finally, the white f-pawn will advance comfortably while the black h-pawn is immobilised. All these factors contribute to White's decisive advantage.

71...♔e7 72.f4 ♖c8 73.♖a1 ♖c7 74.f5 ♘e8 75.♖a6! ♔f8 76.♖h6 ♖e7+ 77.♗e6 ♔g7 78.♖xh5 ♖c7 79.♖g5+ ♔h6 80.♖g8 ♘g7 81.f6 1–0

EXERCISE 22
Fischer Robert James
Petrosian Tigran
B42 Buenos Aires 1971

22...♖xd7



EVALUATION

My minor piece is much stronger than Black's. Also I have a much healthier pawn structure (Black has weak and isolated a- and d-pawns) and the presence of pawns on both flanks nearly always favours my bishop. One should not forget that the black a-pawn will be a permanent target of my bishop, as Black cannot push it to a5; my reply then with b5 (if I can not play bxa5 winning a pawn) will give me a strong passed pawn. All these are giving me a quite pleasant advantage.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

An outside passed pawn is nearly always helpful and can increase my advantage, as Black's passed d-pawn is going nowhere. So, I can start by **23.a4**, followed by ♖b1 and b5, or with b5 directly.

PLAN B

Restriction is an important method, guided by the 1st FIDE World Champion W.Steinitz 150 years ago! **23.g4**, suits this method. After **23...h6 24.h4**, I am ready to kick the knight away and add pressure to the weak black d-pawn.

PLAN C

Rooks belong to open files, so I should add this advantage to my bucket by occupying the c-file by **23.♖c1**. The threat of ♖c6 will force my opponent to play **23...♖d6**, when I can invade the 7th rank with **24.♖c7**, seriously increasing my plus.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 22

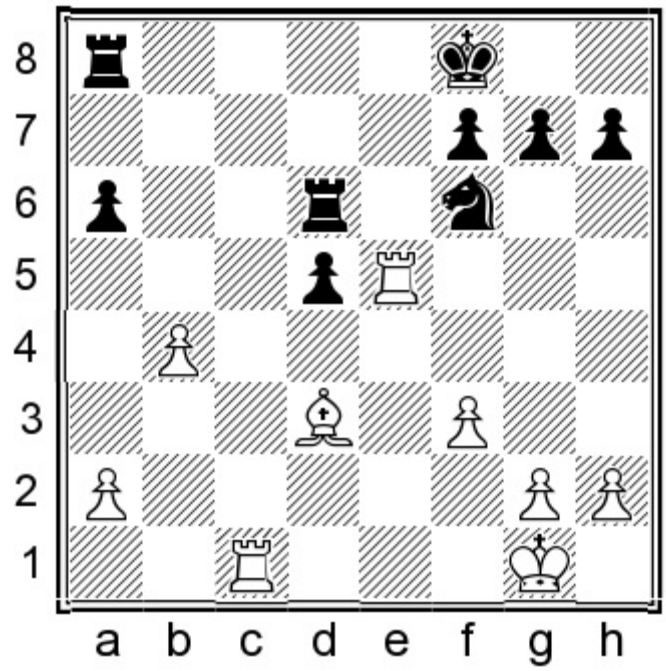
Plan A is not that bad, although Black can go for the c-file by **23...♖c7!**, gaining some counterplay.

Plan B is not the best, as it is too early for it, while Black can again occupy the c-file by **23...♖c7!**.

Plan C is best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
35	**25**	**50**

23.♖c1 ♖d6



Or 23...d4 24.♖c4 ♖ad8 25.a3±.

24.♖c7

Penetrating to the 7th rank is also nearly always correct.

24...♘d7

The alternative was 24...♘e8 25.♖b7 ♖c8 26.♔f2 ♘c7 27.♔e3±.

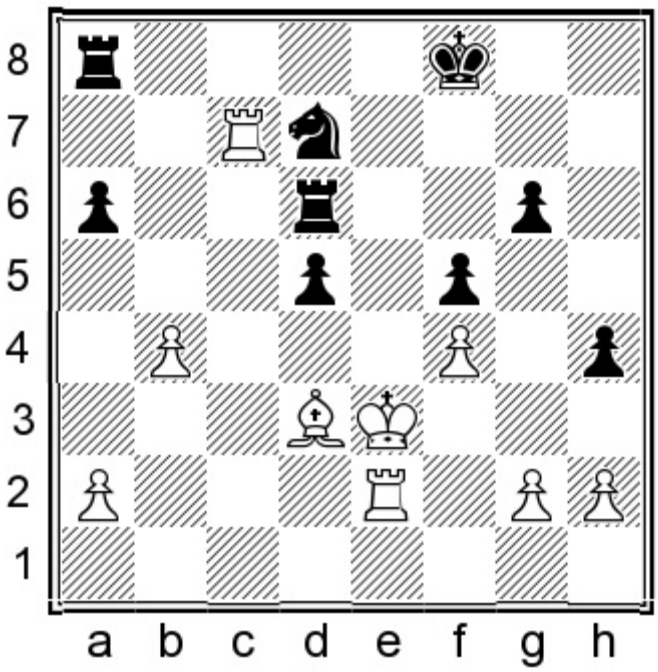
25.♖e2 g6 26.♔f2!

White needs all his pieces for the final assault! The king is an important piece and we should always think about how to make it work more effectively.

26...h5 27.f4 h4

27...♘b6 28.♖ee7 ♖f6 29.g3±, is not an improvement.

28.♔f3 f5 29.♔e3



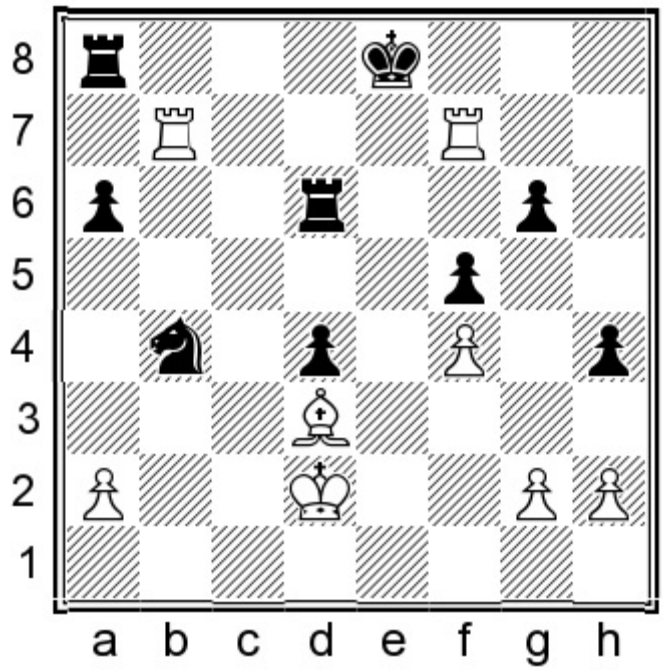
29...d4+

What else? If 29...♘f6 30.♔d4 ♘e4 31.♖ec2 and White is in full control over the entire board.

30.♔d2 ♘b6

Or 30...♘f6 31.♗c4! ♘e4+ 32.♔d3 ♖ad8 33.a3, and Black has run out of useful moves. The harmonious coordination of the white forces is extraordinary.

31.♖ee7 ♘d5 32.♖f7+ ♔e8 33.♖b7 ♘xb4



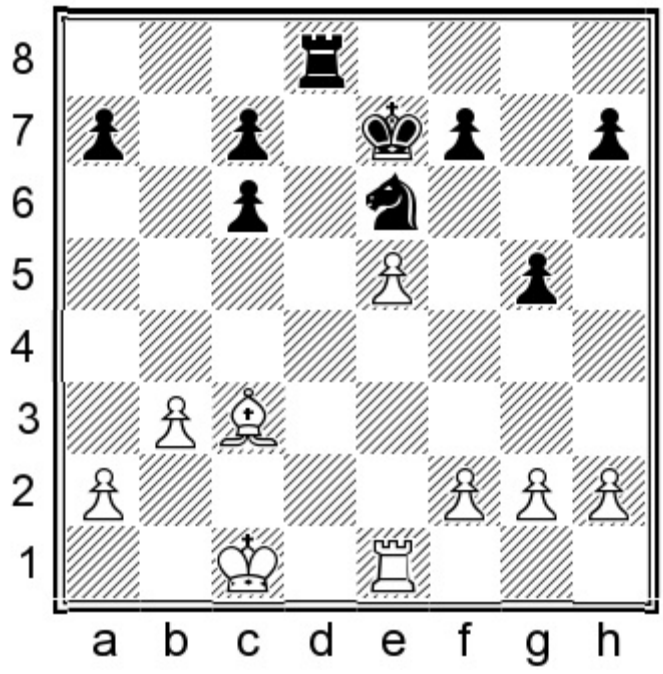
34.♗c4

The text move was enough to force Black to resign, but there was also a mate starting with 34.♖h7!.

1–0

EXERCISE 23
Kasparov Garry
Timman Jan
C45 Wijk aan Zee 2000

22...♖xd8



EVALUATION

Despite the reduced material I am still having the better prospects in the endgame, thanks to my better minor piece, but mainly due to my suburb pawn structure — many black weaknesses on the queenside. My plan should be the creation of an attack against the weak pawns on this flank.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

It is logical to immediately go after the black weak pawns by **23.♖e4**, intending ♖a4. Black can defend with **23...♖d5 24.♔c2 c5 25.♖a4**, with a great advantage, or by **23...♘f4**, but after **24.♖a4** (or **24.♗d2 ♘d3+ 25.♔c2 h6 26.f3 ♖d5 27.h4**±) **24...♘e2+ 25.♔c2 ♘xc3 26.♔xc3**, I also stand clearly better.

PLAN B

The black queenside weaknesses can 'wait', so I should try to create an extra weakness on the kingside. For this I would need my rook to attack the kingside via the 3rd rank by **23.♖e3**, intending ♖h3 or ♖g3. My advantage should increase by this method.

PLAN C

I think that I should give my rook an open file to act and for this best seems to be **23.h4**. After **23...h6** (**23...g4 24.♖e4**±) **24.hxg5 hxg5 25.♖h1**, my rook has improved.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 23

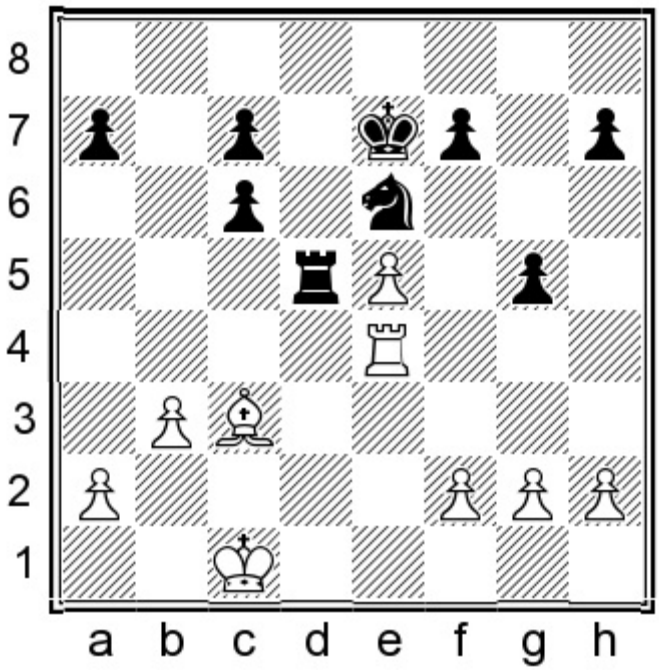
Plan A is best — see the game.

Plan B is not giving much after **23...♘f4!**.

Plan C is the worst, as Black can opt for **23...gxh4! 24.♖h1 ♖g8**, with counterplay.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**15**	**0**

23.♖e4! ♖d5



24.♔c2

The immediate 24.♖a4, deserved attention, but White preferred to keep his pieces in full harmony, as after 24...♘f4 25.♖xa7 ♘e2+ 26.♔b2 ♘xc3 27.♔xc3 ♔d7, it is not clear if White's advantage is sufficient for a win.

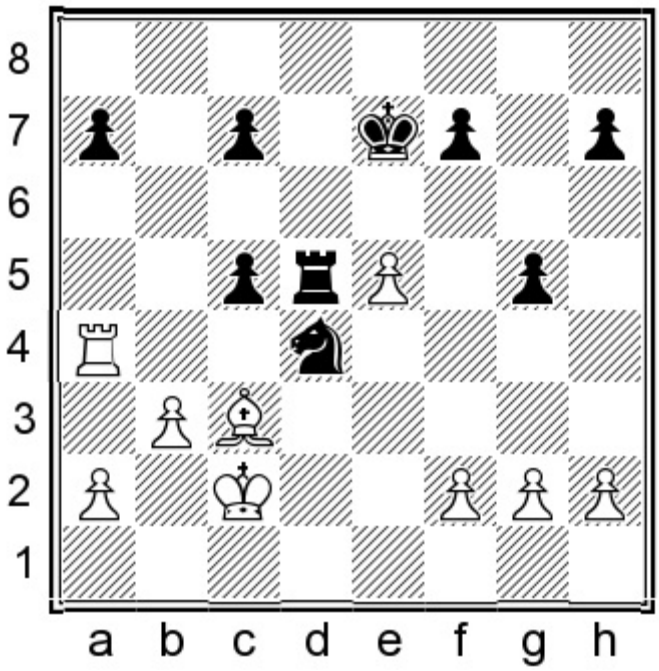
24...c5

An attempt to look for chances in a rook endgame. Unfortunately for Black, not all rook endgames are drawish! 24...♘f4, was another option and the one that Black (probably) should have gone for: 25.h4 h6 26.g3 ♘d3 27.f4±. It must be mentioned that 24...a6, is not helpful either: 25.♖a4 ♘c5 26.♖a5 ♘e4

27.♗b4+ ♔d7 (27...c5 28.f3!±) 28.f3 ♖xa5 29.♗xa5 ♘c5 30.♗d2 h6 31.♗e3 ♘e6 32.♔d3±.

25.♖a4 ♘d4+

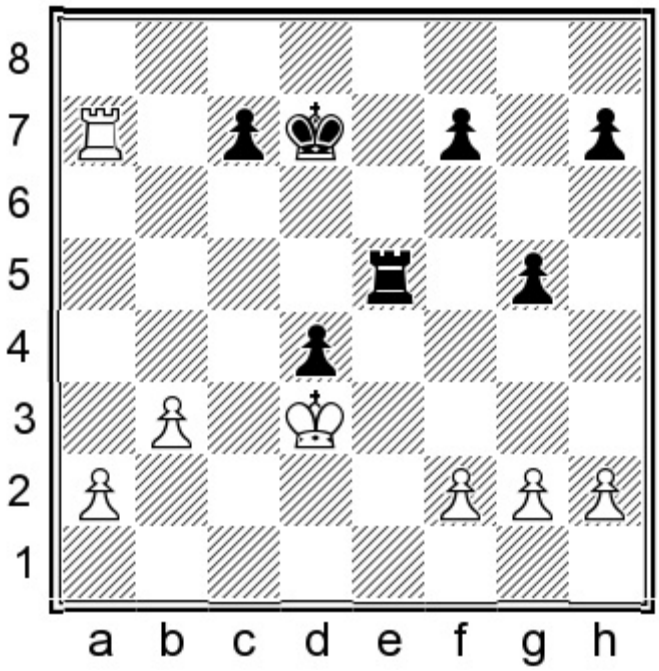
There was no other way for Black to avoid losing material.



26.♗xd4!

One of the main advantages of having a good bishop vs a bad (or inferior) knight is that (at the right moment) the minor pieces can be exchanged, in order to increase (or obtain) the advantage!

26...cxd4 27.♖xa7 ♔d7 28.♔d3 ♖xe5



29.♖a4! c5 30.b4!

This is the position White was striving for. He wins a central pawn or obtains two dangerous passed

pawns. Both options are highly unpleasant for Black.

30...♔e6

30...♔c6 31.bxc5 ♖xc5 32.♖c4!+–, is bad, but this was Black's last chance to play 30...c4+!?, in order to get some counterplay. White is still on top after 31.♔xd4 (31.♔xc4 ♖e2 32.♖a5!? [32.♖a7+!? ♔e6 33.♖a6+ ♔e7 34.♖a5] 32...♖xf2 33.♖xg5 ♖xa2 34.♔xd4, with good chances for a win) 31...♖e2 32.♖a7+ ♔e6 33.♖a6+ ♔d7 34.♖f6 ♔e7 35.♖f5 ♖xa2 36.♔xc4. Another option for Black was 30...♖f5 31.f3 g4 32.fxg4 ♖f2 33.bxc5 ♖xg2 34.h3 ♖g3+ (34...♔c6 35.♔xd4 ♖d2+ 36.♔c4+–) 35.♔xd4 ♖xh3 36.♔d5! ♖d3+ 37.♖d4 ♖a3 38.♖f4+– and 30...cxb4 31.♖xb4 ♖a5 32.a4 ♔e6 33.♔xd4+–.

31.♖a6+ ♔f5

Or 31...♔d5 32.♖a5 ♔d6 33.♖xc5 ♖xc5 34.bxc5+ ♔xc5 35.g4, and White wins.

32.b5 ♖d5

Or 32...♖e1 33.♖c6+–.

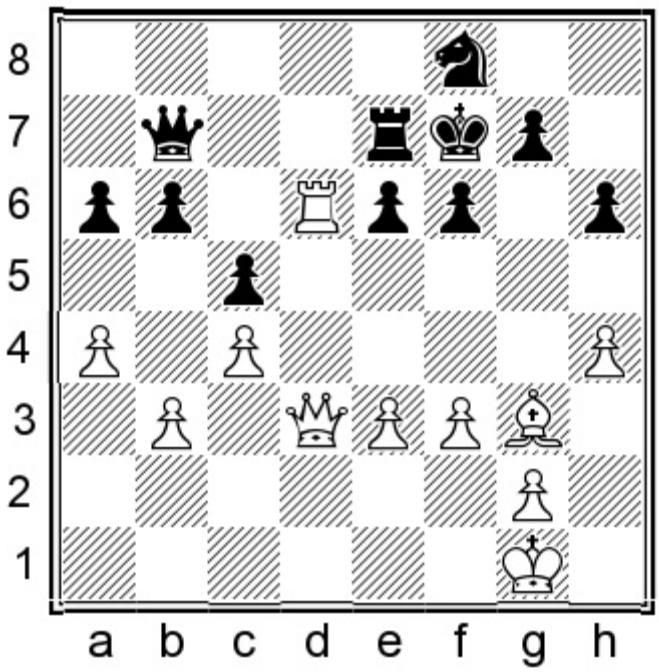
33.♖c6 c4+ 34.♔xc4 d3 35.♔xd5! d2 36.g4+!

36...♔xg4 37.♖c4+ ♔f3 38.♖d4.

1–0

EXERCISE 24
Miles Anthony
Dzindzichashvili Roman
E12 Tilburg 1978

37...♖e7



EVALUATION

It seems that I am holding an advantage due to my better minor piece and the possession of the only open file. But the question is if this advantage is sufficient for a win, as the position is quite closed, restricting my bishop.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

My opponent plans to exchange the heavy pieces via the d7-square, minimising my advantage. So, I should try to fight against this and a good way to do it is by playing **38.e4 ♖d7** (**38...e5 39.♕d5+⩱**) **39.e5**, when I have strengthen my rook.

PLAN B

It seems that I cannot avoid exchanges down the d-file, so I should be prepared for a plain bishop vs knight ending. For this my pawns should be 'optimally' placed, which means on light squares, so I should go for **38.h5**. Of course my h5-pawn can always be traded off by Black with ...g6, but then new pawn weaknesses will be created on the kingside.

PLAN C

I should do something before I lose any kind of advantage I can have. So I should try to create play on the queenside by **38.a5**. Black can play **38...bxa5** (**38...b5 39.♖b6+–**) **39.♕c3 ♕b4 40.♕xb4 axb4 41.♖xa6**, with an advantage.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 24

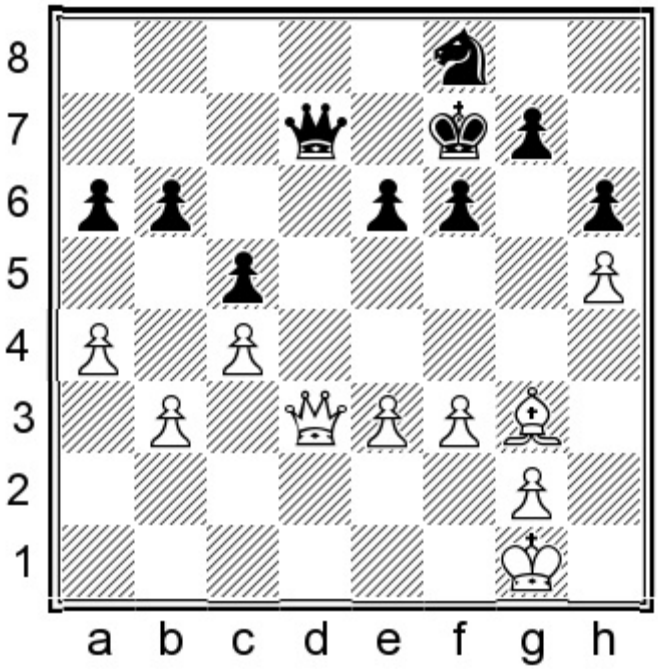
Plan A is not bad, although the white pawn on e5 doesn't help the bishop.

Plan B is best — see the game.

Plan C is the worst, as Black can play **41...e5**, with quality.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
35	**50**	**10**

38.h5! ♖d7 39.♖xd7+ ♕xd7



39...♘xd7?, loses immediately: 40.♕g6+ ♔f8 41.♗d6+ ♔g8 42.♕e8+ ♔h7 43.♕xe6+–.

40.♕xd7+ ♘xd7 41.♗c7! a5?!

Clearly afraid of the a4-a5 break, but this is an illusion. The alternatives were also unattractive for Black:

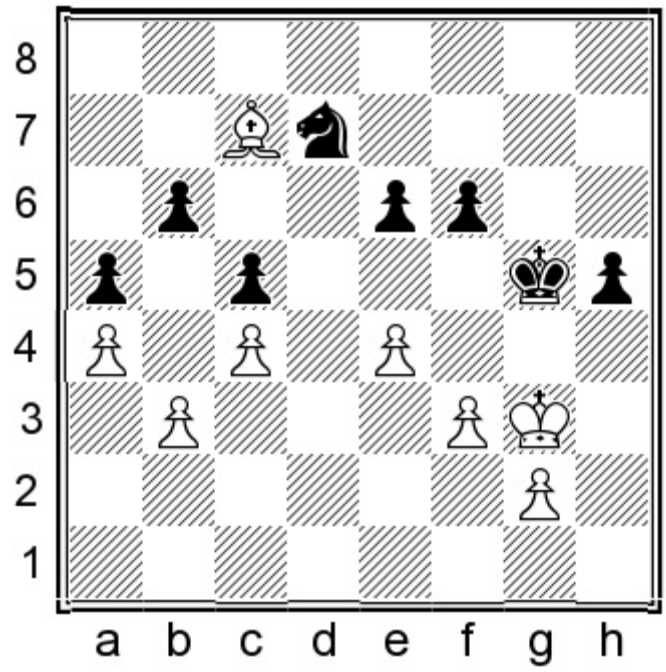
a) 41...♔e7 42.♔f2 ♔f7 43.♔g3 ♔e7 44.♔f4 ♔f7 45.g4 ♔e7 46.♔e4 ♔f7 47.f4 ♔e7 48.f5! ♔f7 49.♗d8! ♔e8 (49...a5 50.♗c7 ♔e7 51.♔f4 ♔f7 52.♗d6!) 50.fxe6+–.

b) 41...f5 42.♔f2 ♔f6 43.♗d8+ ♔e5 44.♔g3 (44.♗e7!? a5? 45.♔e1 ♘f6 46.f4+ ♔e4 47.♗xf6 gxf6 48.♔e2 e5 49.g3 exf4 50.gxf4+–) 44...♔d6 (44...f4+ 45.♔f2 fxe3+ 46.♔xe3 ♔f5 47.g4+ ♔e5 48.♗e7 and mate in two!) 45.♔f4 ♘f6 46.g4 (46.♗xb6? ♘xh5#) 46...fxg4 47.fxg4 ♘d7 48.g5±.

42.♔f2 g5

Perhaps Black should have refrained from the text, but such advice is easier to give than follow, when he is so cramped.

43.hxg6+ ♔xg6 44.♔g3 ♔g5 45.e4 h5



46.♔h3!

The hasty 46.f4+?, would be wrong, as after 46...♔g6 47.♗d8 f5, fixing the white f-pawn on the same colour square as the white bishop, there would be no winning chances left.

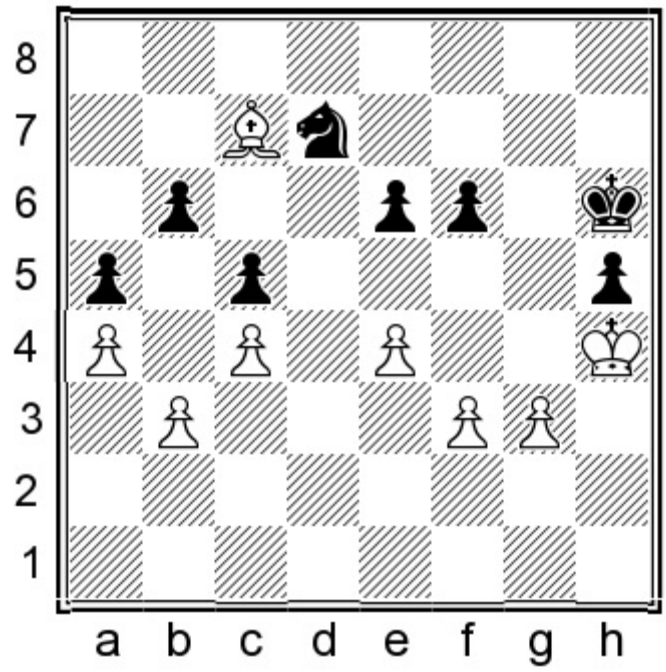
46...♔h6 47.♔h4 ♔g6 48.♗d8 ♔h6 49.♔g3 ♔g7

49...♔g5?! 50.e5!, is nice.

50.♔h4 ♔h6 51.♗c7 ♔g6 52.g3

White refrained from the immediate 52.g4, due to 52...hxg4 53.fxg4 f5. However, after 54.exf5+ exf5 55.g5, he still wins. On the other hand, he can play this advance anytime.

52...♔h6



53.g4!

Another typical endgame technique, which the respected author and trainer Mark Dvoretsky called ‘enlarging the playing field’. The point is to exchange pawns, with the goal of clearing the king’s path to the opposite wing.

53...hxg4 54.fxg4! ♔g6 55.♔g3 ♔g5

Or 55...f5 56.gxf5+ exf5 57.♔f4!+–.

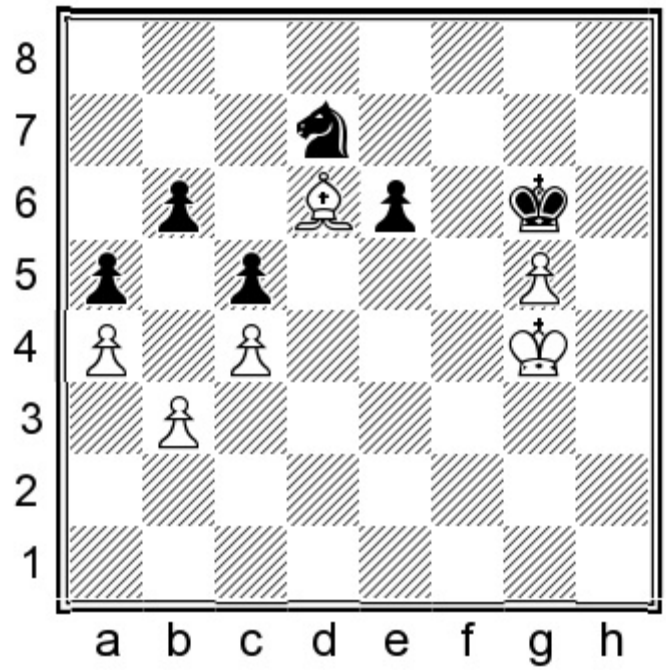
56.♔f3 ♔h6

The alternative 56...e5, does not help in view of 57.♔g3 ♔g6 58.♔h4 ♔h6 59.♗d8 ♔g6 60.g5! (60.♗e7 ♔f7) 60...fxg5+ (60...f5 61.exf5+ ♔xf5 62.♔h5! e4 63.g6 e3 [63...♘f6+ 64.♗xf6 ♔xf6 65.♔h6 e3 66.g7 e2 67.g8=♕+–] 64.g7 e2 65.g8=♕ e1=♕ 66.♕f7++–) 61.♗xg5 ♘b8 62.♗d8 ♘d7 63.♔g4+– and zugzwang! 56...f5, is also losing to 57.♗d8+ ♔g6 58.gxf5+ exf5 59.♔f4!+–.

57.♔f4 ♔g6 58.e5! fxe5+

Or 58...f5 59.gxf5+ exf5 60.e6+–.

59.♗xe5 ♔f7 60.♗c7 ♔f6 61.g5+ ♔f7 62.♔g4 ♔g6 63.♗d6



Black resigned. He will have to fall in numerous zugzwangs, since his knight cannot move at all. A typical variation is: 63...e5 64.♗c7 e4 65.♔f4 e3 66.♔xe3 ♔xg5 67.♔e4+–, or 63...♔f7 64.♔h5 ♔g7 65.♗c7 ♔h7 (65...e5 66.♔g4+–) 66.g6+ ♔g7 67.♔g5+–.

1–0

Show in Text Mode

GOOD KNIGHT VS BAD BISHOP

The concept of good knight vs bad bishop imbalance is based upon the two sides' pawn structures.

The presence of central pawns (especially when they are placed on the squares of the same colour as the bishop) generally favours the knight, as it decreases the scope of the bishop.

When, moreover, the pawn structure is relatively fixed and strong (or weak) squares exist, the superiority of the knight increases further, since the knight is a more efficient piece in the fight for occupation of outposts.

The knight is a very flexible piece that can move to any square of the board, but the control it exerts is restricted to only a few squares at a time. Consequently, a closed centre or the presence of pawns on only one side of the board significantly favour the knight and make it preferable to the bishop, as the latter does have a great radius of action but is confined to only half the squares of the chessboard.

In view of the above, we may define the superiority of the knight over the bishop as a consequence of the pawn structure and especially when the centre is closed, when there is a fixed structure (on squares of the colour on which the bishop moves) or when there are pawns only on one wing.

Although the knight's superiority usually becomes evident in the endgame, there are many examples that display this superiority in the middle game as well (always under the conditions mentioned above).

The secret to determining which of the minor pieces is superior is the overall examination of the pawn structure.

ENDGAME STRATEGY

The theme of a good knight vs a bad bishop in the endgame occurs quite frequently and is one of the more interesting elements of modern chess; one of the most important imbalances.

Once again, the main reference point is the pawn structure and the knight's superiority becomes evident in the following cases:

SOS Tip 1 — Superior Knight

1. All the pawns on one flank: the knight does not have to move all over the board and at the same time the superiority of the bishop is nullified.
2. Pawns on squares of the same colour as that on which the bishop moves: the bishop loses its mobility, being restricted by its own pawns.
3. A weak colour complex: because the bishop can control only half of the squares on the board, the remaining half are accessible to the opponent's king.
4. A weak pawn structure: the knight can move to any square on the board, but the bishop can only control half of them. Thus if the king and knight can combine in an attack against a pawn placed on

a square of opposite colour to that of the bishop, they can force its capture.
5. A blocked pawn structure or centre: this favours the knight as the bishop lacks mobility.

Knights love outposts — they just sit there and don't bother moving at all, as they are able to control a fair amount of squares from behind and from a distance!

ENDGAME THEORY

We should keep in mind some important guidelines:

SOS Tip 2 — Guidelines

1. The knight can visit every square of the board and so, in inferior positions, the player with the knight can try to construct a fortress on squares of colour opposite to that of the bishop. However, the player has to be careful not to fall into zugzwang.
2. The knight is a short-range piece and likes play on one wing.
3. If in closed positions many enemy pawns are blocked on the same colour as the bishop, the knight can, together with its king, use the weak colour complex to infiltrate the enemy position.
4. In some favourable positions it might be useful to arrange mobile pawn chains on the enemy bishop's colour, so as to restrict its movement. In unfavourable positions this is unlikely to be correct, as these pawn chains can be attacked.
5. Zugzwang: according to the famous ex-World Champion Emanuel Lasker, zugzwang is, along with the altered role of the king and the relative increase in the pawns' value, the most important distinguishing feature of the endgame phase. Zugzwang (as well as mutual zugzwang) is widely employed in endgames with almost every possible material distribution; it's unthinkable that you could play them well without taking it into account.
6. Don't rush! One of the main principles of endgame technique. Before forcing matters and undertaking decisive action (especially when pawn exchanges are involved), you should first strengthen your position as much as possible.

It is quite typical to use the king in order to penetrate into the opponent's camp. For this purpose some pawns have to be exchanged, creating the necessary space to move ahead into the opponent's camp. This is a well-known method that one should keep in mind when having to face blocked pawn structures.

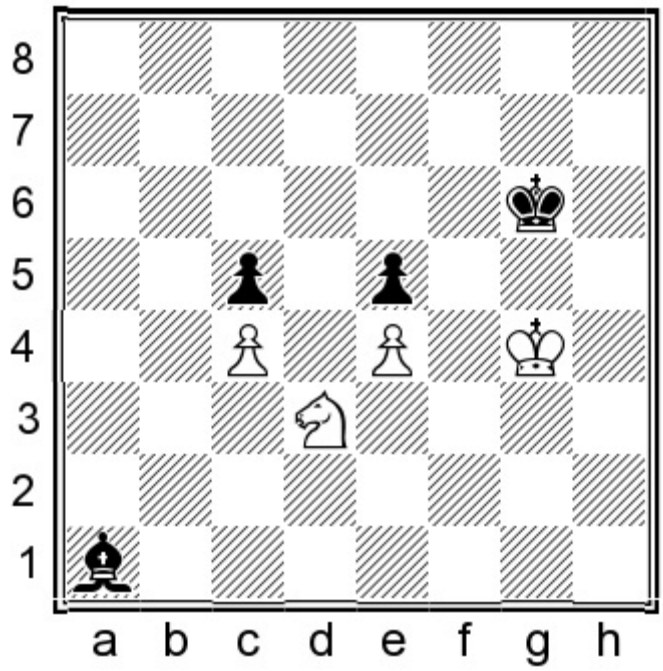
WITH ADDITIONAL PIECES

Commencing the discussion, we should first focus on the famous cooperation motifs of Queen + Knight vs Queen + Bishop. This is better described as the 'Capablanca Theorem': in the endgame queen and knight are superior to queen and bishop.

Of course this theorem is a little bit too simplistic. Usually, at least one further advantage is required and a large percentage of these endgames are drawn in the end.

But still, we must accept that Q+Kn can cooperate more harmoniously than Q+B, as they can create a cooperative attack against every square of the board, in contrast to the alternative pair, which can cooperate on only half the board!

Pachman Ludek
Hromadka Karel
Prague 1944



1.♘e1

Keeping the position closed is the best try. 1.♘xc5, was played in the game but White was unable to make progress after 1...♔f6 2.♘d3 ♔e6 3.♔g5 ♔d6 4.♔f5 ♗d4 5.♘xe5 (5.c5+ ♔c6 6.♔e6 ♗a1=) 5...♔c5, as he can't retain both pawns.

1.♘e1 ♗d4 2.♘f3 ♗c3 3.♘h4+ ♔f6 4.♔h5

It was thought that White can win with this well-known plan, but unfortunately the position is drawish! This is because the defensive side can become active on the other part of the board, activating his king.

4...♗d4 5.♘f5 ♗c3 6.♘e3 ♗d4 7.♘g4+ ♔e6 8.♔g6 ♗c3 9.♘f6 ♗b2 10.♘h7 ♔e7 11.♔f5 ♗c3 12.♘g5 ♗d4 13.♘f3 ♔d6 14.♔f6 ♔d7 15.♘g5

15.♘xe5+? ♔d6–+, sometimes can happen! So, so far so good for White. His 'standard' plan has worked efficiently but, at the end of the day, counterplay is what matters!

15...♔c7!

Black activates his king through the queenside, in order to attack White's pawns from behind. An easy but effective plan, which guarantees a draw.

16.♘f7 ♔b6 17.♘xe5

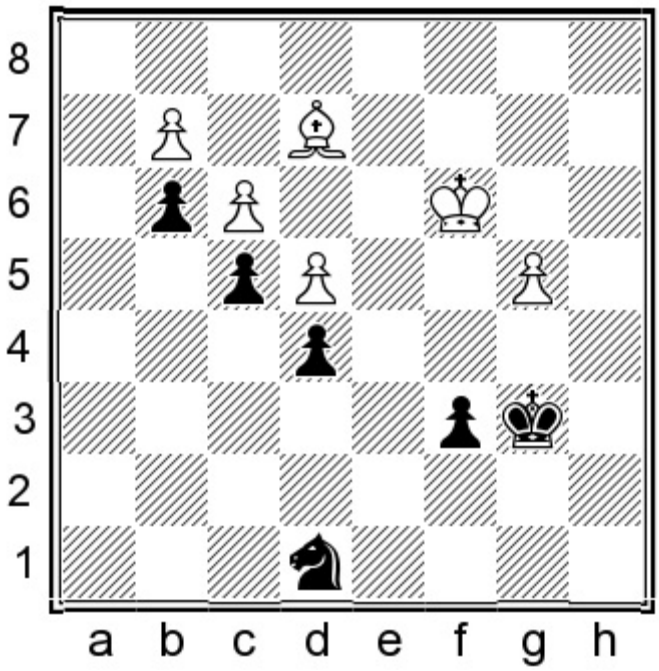
17.♔e6 ♔a5 18.♔d5 ♔b4 19.♘d8 ♔c3 20.♘c6 ♔d3 21.♘b8 ♗c3 22.♘d7 ♗d4=.

17...♔a5 18.♔e6 ♔b4 19.♔d5 ♗xe5! 20.♔xe5 ♔xc4 21.♔d6 ♔d3 22.e5 c4

½-½

EXERCISE 25
Torre Eugenio
Jakobsen Ole
B08 Amsterdam 1973

72.♗e2



EVALUATION

My pluses are significant, mostly based on my superior pawn structure and probably sufficient for victory. My opponent's g2-pawn in rather weak while his bishop lacks targets. At a given moment I will have to offer the exchange of the queenside pawns, so as to be able to penetrate with my king. But which is the most favourable position in which to employ the ...c5 advance?

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I feel that I can go **72...♘d6 73.♗f1 c5 74.♗e2 cxb4+ 75.♔xb4 ♘f7 76.♔c4 ♔c6 77.♗d1 ♘d8** when my knight is heading for the important d4-square.

PLAN B

Before executing the ...c5 advance I should have placed my knight on d4, so good seems to be **72...♘f6 73.♗d3 ♘h7 74.♗f1 ♘g5 75.♔c4 ♘e6 76.♔c3 ♘d4 77.♔d2 c5**, when I am on the right track.

PLAN C

I will continue as the previous plan, but White after **72...♘f6 73.♗d3 ♘h7 74.♗f1 ♘g5 75.♔c4 ♘e6**, should continue with **76.♔c3!** when it seems that I have again to work out a good plan, probably connected with a triangulation.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN

A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 25

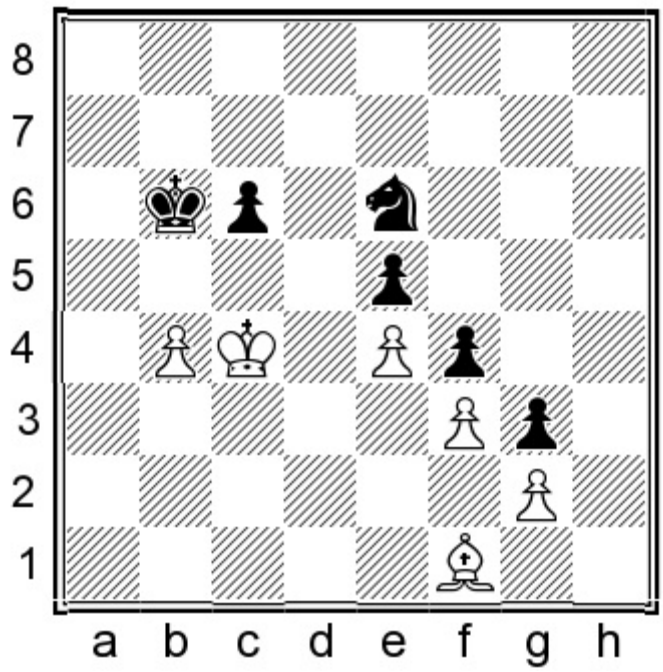
Plan A is not good, as White has achieved the maximum economical defence with the bishop on d1, protecting both squares f3 and c2, so Black cannot improve.

Plan B is best and natural — see the game.

Plan C is equal to Plan B, but you take the points only if you have seen the triangulation!

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
0	**50**	**50**

72...♘f6! 73.♗d3 ♘h7 74.♗f1 ♘g5 75.♔c4 ♘e6



76.♔c3

76.♗e2 ♘d4 77.♗d1 ♔b7 78.♔c5 (78.♔c3 ♔a6 79.♔c4 ♔b6) 78...♔c7 79.♔c4 ♔b6 80.♔d3 ♔b5 81.♔c3 c5 82.bxc5 ♔xc5, is not a difference.

76...♘d4

Here Black has achieved his first aim: the bishop can't move due to ...♘xf3 and the king must guard the c2-square in order to keep the knight out of e3 (...♘c2-e3).

77.♔d2 c5

The appropriate moment. The first stage of Black's plan has been successfully completed, but the win is still a long way ahead.

78.bxc5+

78.♔c3?! cxb4+ 79.♔xb4 ♘c2+ 80.♔c3 ♘e3–+.

78...♔xc5 79.♔c3 ♔b6

By means of triangulation Black succeeds in invading White's camp.

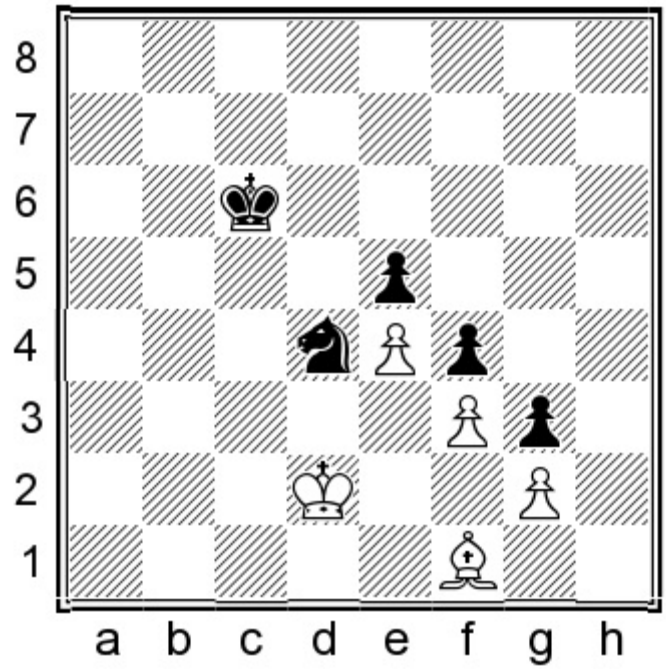
80.♔d2 ♔a5?!

The black king heads in the wrong direction. Completing the triangulation was of course better, especially to avoid problems with the fifty-move rule.

81.♔c3 ♔b6

A certain care is required, as 81...♔a4? 82.♔c4! ♘c2 83.♔d5 ♘e3+ 84.♔xe5 ♘xf1 85.♔xf4, is hardly optimal for Black.

82.♔d2 ♔c6



83.♗e2

Or 83.♔d3 ♔b5! 84.♔c3+ ♔c5.

83...♔c5 84.♗d1 ♔c4 85.♗e2+ ♔b3 86.♗d1+ ♔b2

Next White's king has to be driven to g1.

87.♔e1

87.♗e2?! ♘c2–+.

87...♔c3 88.♗a4 ♔d3 89.♗d1 ♔e3 90.♔f1

Bishop moves allow the decisive blow on f3.

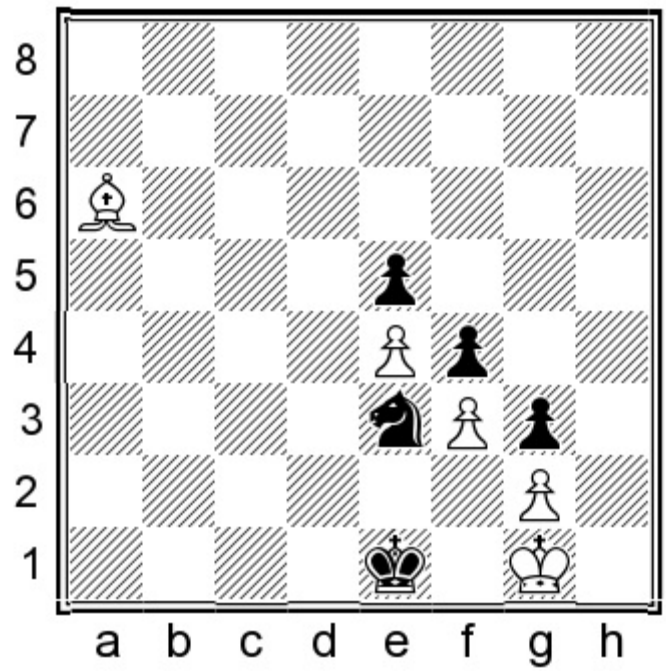
90...♔d2 91.♗a4 ♘e2 92.♗d1!? ♘c3!

The careless capture of the bishop would bring about a stalemate!

93.♗e2 ♘b1!

Intending ...♘a3, from where the knight will be transferred to the critical e3-square via c4 or c2.

94.♗c4 ♘a3 95.♗b3 ♔c3 96.♗a4 ♘c4 97.♗b5 ♘e3+ 98.♔g1 ♔d2 99.♗a6 ♔e1



100.♗d3

The winning process requires one further step: Black will transfer his knight to d4 or d2 and his king to the e2- or e3-square, and then he will sacrifice his knight on f3, winning thanks to his pawn mass. This procedure is anything but easy as, although the knight is superior to the bishop in this position, it has difficulties crossing certain squares, exactly because of the bishop's ability to control several squares at the same time. In any case, the critical square now is b7 (!), the only one from which the black knight can achieve its aim.

100...♘d1 101.♗a6 ♘c3 102.♗d3 ♘a4 103.♗b5

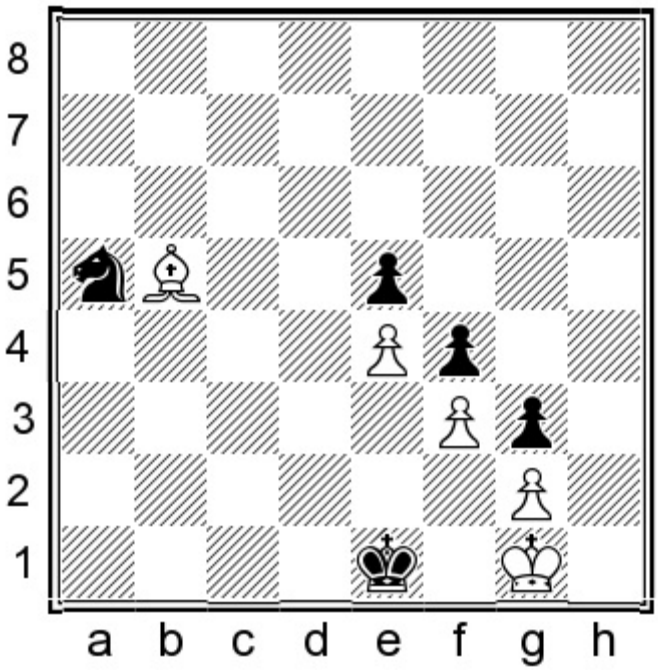
A tougher defence was provided by 103.♗c4 ♘b6 (103...♘c5 104.♗d5, controlling b7 and c6) 104.♗a6 ♘a8! 105.♗b5 ♘c7 106.♗c4 ♘e8 107.♗b5 ♘d6 108.♗a6 ♘f7 109.♗b7 ♘g5 110.♗c8 ♔e2 111.♗g4 ♘f7 112.♗c8 ♘d6 113.♗a6+ ♔e1 and White is in zugzwang.

103...♘c5 104.♗c4 ♘b7 105.♗b5

Or 105.♗g8 ♘a5 106.♗d5 ♔e2 107.♗e6 ♘c6 108.♗c4+ ♔e1 109.♗d5 ♘d4 110.♗c4 ♔d2 111.♔f1 ♔e3

112.♔g1 ♘xf3+–+.

105...♘a5



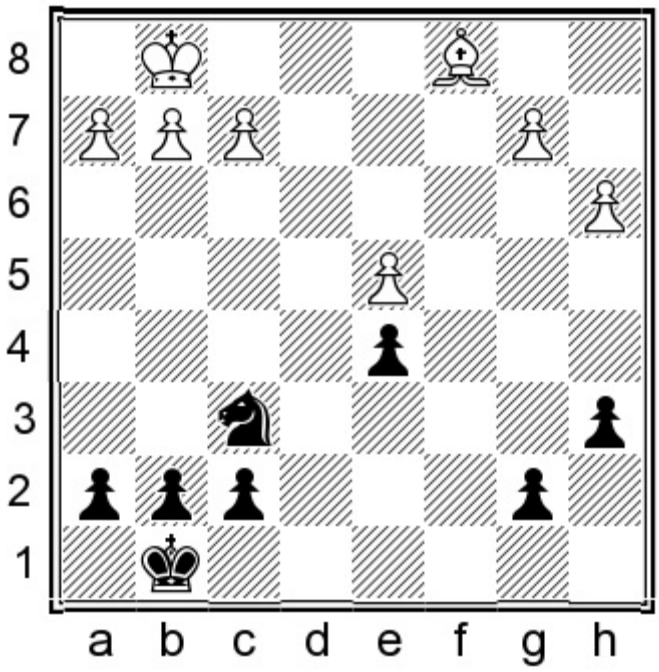
106.♗a4

In case the bishop remained on the f1-a6 diagonal, the black king would reach the e3-square via d1.

106...♘c4 107.♗b5 ♘d2 108.♗a4 ♔e2 109.♗b5+ ♔e3 110.♗a4 ♘xf3+! 111.gxf3 ♔xf3 112.♗c6 g2 0–1

EXERCISE 26
Saidy Anthony Fred
Fischer Robert James
A33 New York 1964

23.♗xc1



EVALUATION

It seems that both of us are happy with the position that has resulted from the early middlegame skirmish! My opponent because he believed that he will hold the draw; me, because I have faith in my technique. The truth lies somewhere in-between: I am standing a bit better, as the pawn structure (the blocked d-pawns in particular) favours the knight. My plan must be to invade White's camp with my king (in general) and to attack the d4-pawn (more specifically). In order to achieve this however, I think that some or all of the kingside pawns must be exchanged in order to clear a path for the king. My advantage may not be sufficient for victory, but on the other hand the road to the desired draw is long and arduous.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

A logical way to proceed seems to advance my kingside pawns trying to exchange them, while my king should be placed on the kingside, assisting this procedure. So, **23...♘d7 24.♔f1 ♘f8 25.♔e2 ♘e6 26.♔d3 h5! 27.♗e3 ♔h7**, seems fine.

PLAN B

As in all endings, I should primary centralise my king, starting with **23...♔f8 24.♔f1 ♔e8** (**24...♔e7? 25.♗g5!**) **25.♔e2 ♔d7 26.♔d3 ♔e6**. Next I will place my knight on c6, attacking White's central weakness.

PLAN C

There isn't much to ask for my king on the kingside or in the centre, so I should try to penetrate on the queenside via the light squares. The path is easy, as White's bishop is a darksquared one and my opponent can hardly create any counterplay. So, I will opt for **23...♔f8 24.♔f1 ♔e8 25.♔e2 ♔d7 26.♔d3 ♔c6**.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 26

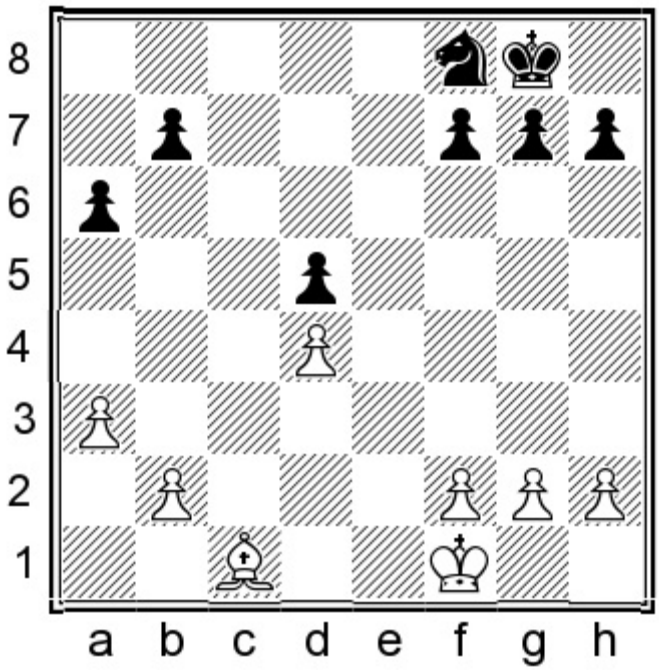
Plan A is best — see the game.

Plan B is giving nothing to Black, as there is no logical follow-up to improve.

Plan C is equal to Plan B — the penetration to the queenside is an illusion and has nothing to do with the 'reality'!

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**0**	**0**

23...♘d7 24.♔f1 ♘f8



25.♔e2

25.g4 ♘e6 26.♗e3, seems like a better defensive set-up, as it prevents Black from building a broad pawn front.

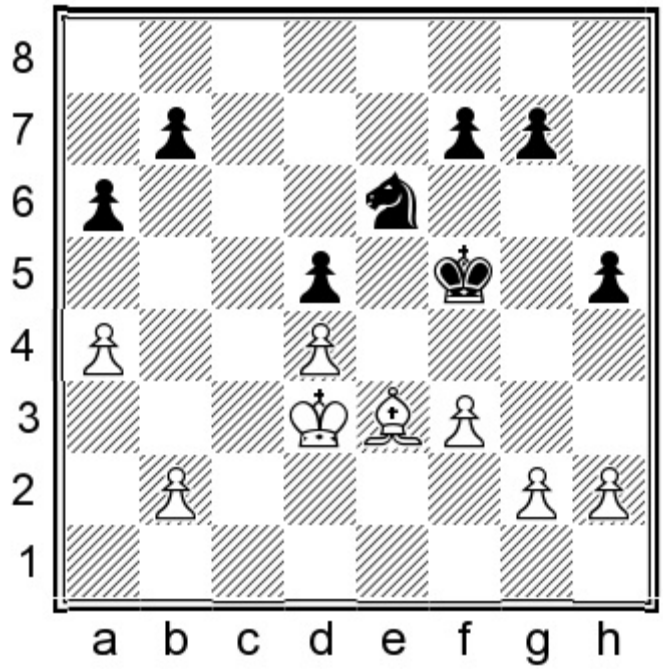
25...♘e6 26.♔d3 h5!

The correct way of advancing the black kingside pawns commences with the h-pawn, aiming to 'dissolve' the kingside.

27.♗e3

White waits, as the 'active' 27.h3 ♔h7 28.g4 ♔g6 29.f4 (29.♗e3 ♘g5!) 29...hxg4 30.hxg4 f5!, favours Black.

27...♔h7 28.f3 ♔g6 29.a4 ♔f5



30.♔e2

Now it's time for the black kingside pawns to advance.

30...g5 31.♔f2 ♘d8 32.♗d2 ♔g6 33.♔e3 ♘e6 34.♔d3 ♔f5 35.♗e3 f6 36.♔e2 ♔g6 37.♔d3

Black has not rushed, as he has all the time in the world at his disposal. At this point, the advance 37.g4 f5 38.h3 ♘f8 39.♔f2 ♘d7 40.b3 ♘f6, is again a mistake, as White would end up with weak pawns.

37...f5 38.♔e2

38.g3 f4 39.gxf4 g4 40.fxg4 hxg4 41.♗f2 ♘xf4+ 42.♔e3 ♔f5 43.♗g3=, was more accurate. It must be noted that the presence of White's h-pawn on its initial square is helpful to him.

38...f4! 39.♗f2 ♘g7!

The knight is heading for the outpost on f5.

40.h3

A necessary move. 40.g4? fxg3 41.hxg3 g4!, can only help Black.

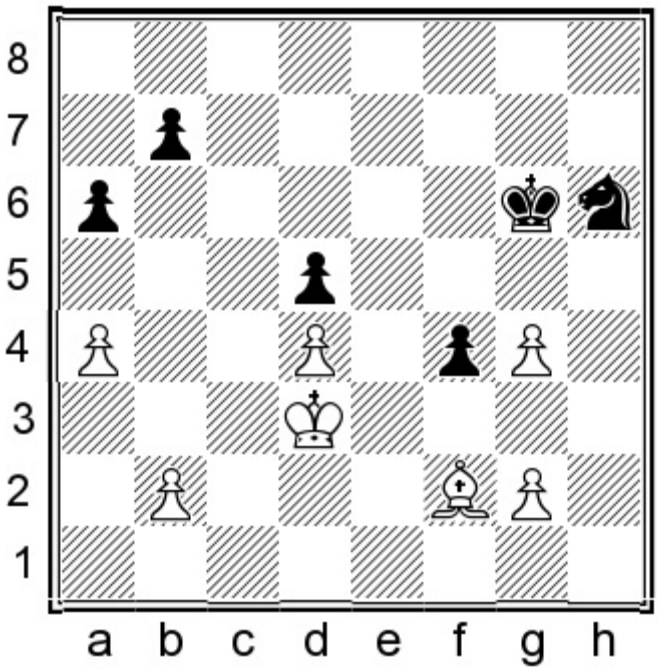
40...♘f5 41.♔d3 g4 42.hxg4

Compulsory. Black has an easy win after 42.♔e2? g3! 43.♗g1 ♘h4 44.♔f1 ♔f6.

42...hxg4 43.fxg4

43.♔e2? g3 44.♗g1 ♘h4 45.♔f1 a5 46.b3 ♔f5, leads to a tragicomic zugzwang situation!

43...♘h6



44.♗e1?

The decisive mistake, as it allows Black's king to penetrate on the kingside. White was forced to play 44.♔e2 ♘xg4 45.♗g1 (45.♗e1 ♔f5 46.♔d3 ♘e3 47.g3 ♘c4 48.b3 ♘d6 49.gxf4 ♔xf4 50.♗a5 ♔f3∓) 45...♔f5 46.♔f3 ♘f6 47.♗h2 ♘h5 48.a5! ♔g5 49.g4 fxg3 50.♗xg3 ♘f6. Interesting is the fact that, were the b-pawns on b4 (white) and b5 (black), the position would be an easy win for Black, as the white king would be unable to invade the queenside in search of counterplay.

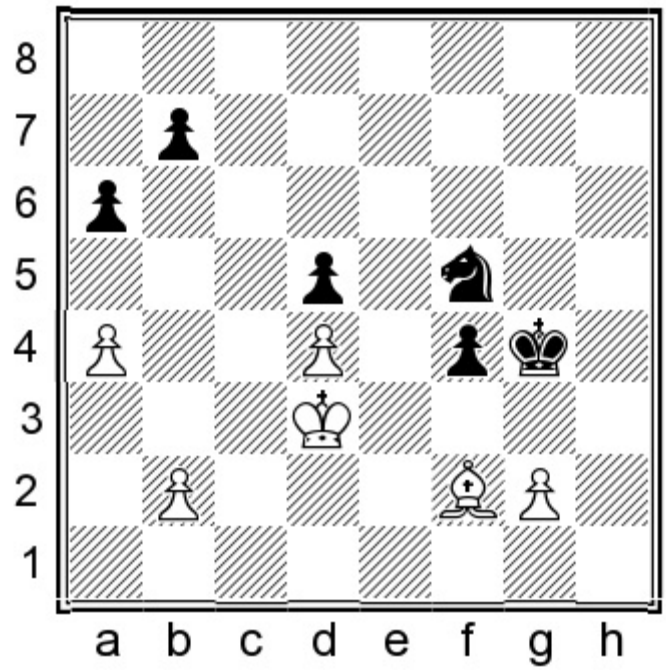
44...♘xg4 45.♗d2 ♔f5 46.♗e1 ♘f6 47.♗h4 ♘h5 48.♗e1 ♔g4 49.♔e2

49.b3 ♘g3 50.a5 ♘f5 51.♗f2 ♘h4–+.

49...♘g3+ 50.♔d3

The pawn ending after 50.♗xg3 ♔xg3 51.♔f1 f3!, is an easy win for Black.

50...♘f5 51.♗f2



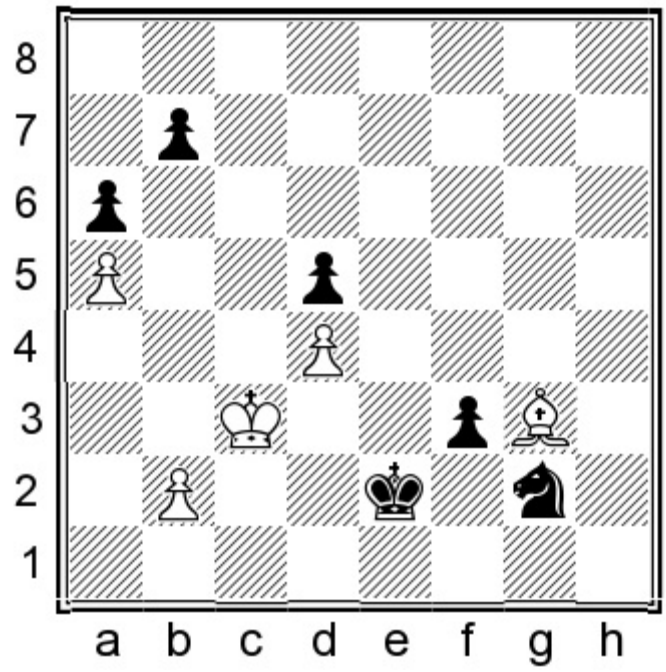
51...♘h4!

There is no longer any salvation for White.

52.a5

52.♗xh4 ♔xh4 53.♔e2 ♔g3 54.♔f1 f3–+.

52...♘xg2 53.♔c3 ♔f3 54.♗g1 ♔e2 55.♗h2 f3 56.♗g3



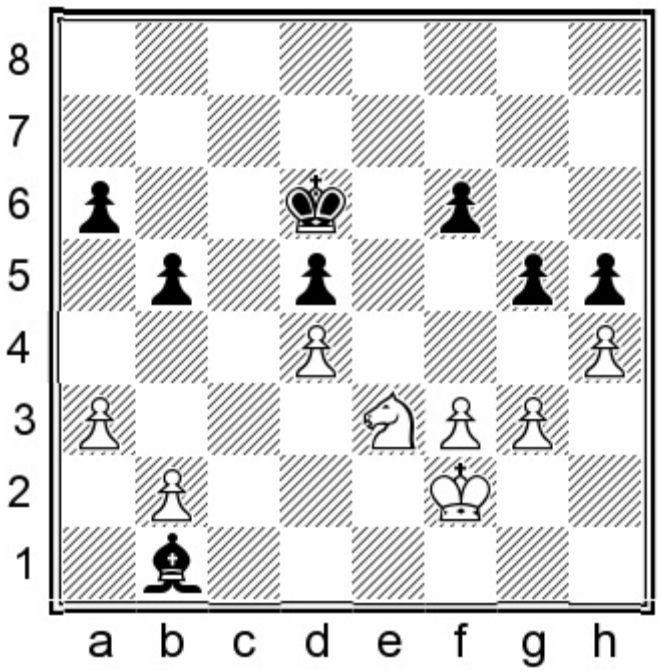
56...♘e3

Now, after ...♘f5, the f-pawn will finally promote.

0–1

EXERCISE 27
Karpov Anatoly
Kasparov Garry
D34 Moscow 1984

45...♗b1



EVALUATION

A difficult ending, where great accuracy is required and, in a practical game, I would say that the odds of White winning are greater than those of Black drawing. One thing is clear: having the pawn on h5 makes life more difficult for my opponent than if it were on its starting square.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

As there seems to be nothing critical for the moment, I should try to penetrate on the queenside via the b4-square. This looks nice as my opponent has weakened his pawn structure by placing his pawn on b5. So, I would opt for **46.♔e2**, followed by ♔d2-c3.

PLAN B

Kingside is my object and I should try to clear-it off, expanding the battlefield. Starting with the natural **46.g4**, looks nice: **46...hxg4** (**46...gxh4 47.gxh5**) **47.hxg5 fxg5 48.♘xg4** and I am on the right track for ♔g3 and f4.

PLAN C

Of course the kingside breakthrough should drive my intentions, aiming for the thematic g4 advance.

But before that, I should block the queenside by **46.b4**, killing any potential black counterplay with ...b4. I think that this is an important move, regarding the b-pawns. If now I manage to invade Black's camp, the position will be won.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 27

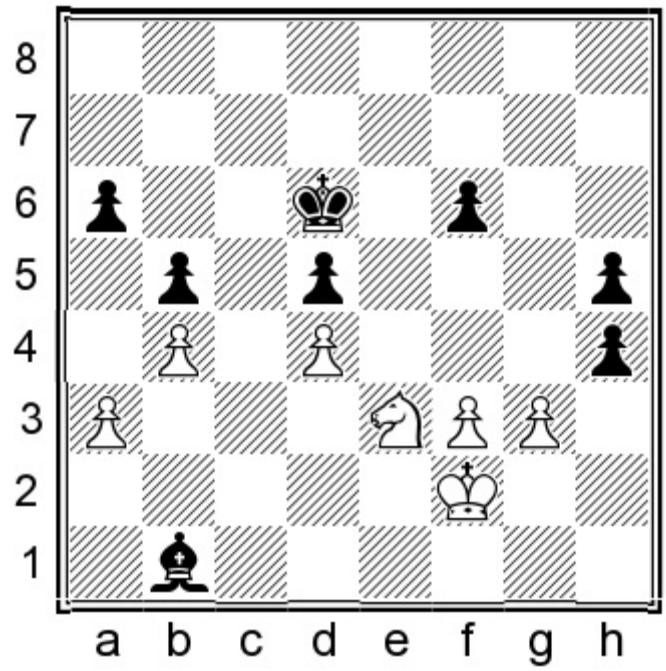
Plan A is simply bad — nothing to be gained.

Plan B can be tried.

Plan C is best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
0	**30**	**50**

46.b4 gxh4?



A fatal error. After 46...♔e6! 47.g4!? (47.hxg5 fxg5 48.f4 g4 holds the draw. Equally good is 48...gxf4 49.gxf4 ♗e4! [but not 49...h4? 50.♔g2 ♗f5 51.♔h2! and White wins] 50.♔g3 ♔f6 with a draw) 47...hxg4 48.hxg5 gxf3 (48...fxg5 49.♘xg4 ♗a2 [49...♗f5 50.♔g3 ♔d6 51.f4 gxf4+ 52.♔xf4 ♗b1 53.♔g5 ♔e6 54.♘e5] 50.♘e3 ♔f6 51.♔g3 ♗b3 52.♔g4 ♗c4 53.f4 ♗e2+ 54.♔g3 ♗c4 55.♔f3 ♔g6 56.♔g4 ♗e2+ 57.♔g3 ♗c4 58.♔f3 ♔f6 59.♘g4+! ♔f5 60.♘h6+ ♔g6 61.fxg5 ♔xg5 62.♘f7+) 49.gxf6 ♗e4 50.♘g4 ♔f7 51.♔g3 ♔e6 52.♔f4 ♔f7 53.♔e5 ♗g6! 54.♔xd5 ♗h5, Black is on the right track.

47.♘g2!!

A brilliant move, creating an entry point for White's king — as we have already noticed, the key to this ending. 47.gxh4? ♗g6 48.♔g3 ♔e6 49.♘g2 ♔d6 50.♘f4 ♗f7 51.♘d3 ♗e6 52.♘c5 ♗c8, leads nowhere, as the white king is unable to penetrate. This variation makes clear why it is necessary to exchange two pairs of pawns on the kingside.

47...hxg3+

47...h3 48.♘f4, wins both h-pawns.

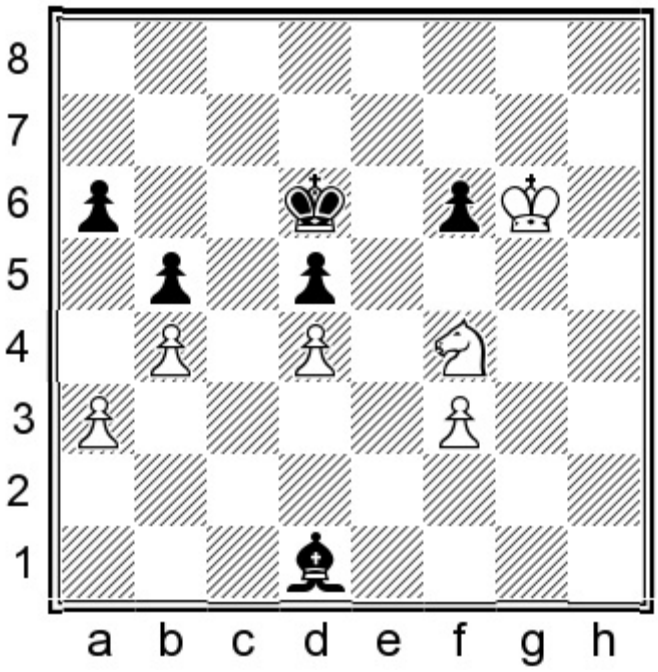
48.♔xg3 ♔e6

White also wins after 48...♗g6 49.♘f4 ♗f7 50.♔h4.

49.♘f4+ ♔f5 50.♘xh5

Threatening ♘g7-e8-c7, therefore the black king must retreat.

50...♔e6 51.♘f4+ ♔d6 52.♔g4 ♗c2 53.♔h5 ♗d1 54.♔g6



54...♔e7!

A very good defensive move, as the d-pawn is not important; it even hinders Black. After 54...♗xf3 55.♔xf6, White's position wins even without the a-pawns. The placement of the b-pawns is of particular importance, since these pawns prevent possible counterplay by the black king on the queenside.

55.♘xd5+?

A serious error, despite capturing a pawn with check! White could not resist the temptation to win the d-pawn, but this is wrong in principle as it opens a path for Black's king, which must be guarded. Correct is 55.♘h5! ♗xf3 56.♘xf6 and White will slowly force the black king away from the squares e7 and d6, winning the black d5-pawn under favourable circumstances: 56...♗e4+ 57.♔g5 ♗d3! 58.♘g4! ♗f1 59.♘e5 ♗h3 60.♔g6! (60.♘d3 ♔f7) 60...♔e6 61.♘c6 ♔d6 62.♘a5 ♔e7 63.♘b3 ♗d7 64.♘c5 ♗c8 65.♔g7 (Black is in zugzwang and loses the a6-pawn but can still offer resistance, though White should eventually prevail) 65...♗f5 66.♘xa6. Important remarks for this position:

1. White always wins if his king reaches one of the key-squares f6, e5 or f5 and Black's king is passive.

2. In that case, White even wins without his a3-pawn.

3. Furthermore, White prevails if he wins one of Black's pawns.

4. Winning the d5-pawn is sufficient in this case, as White's knight can jump back to c3, when White always wins.

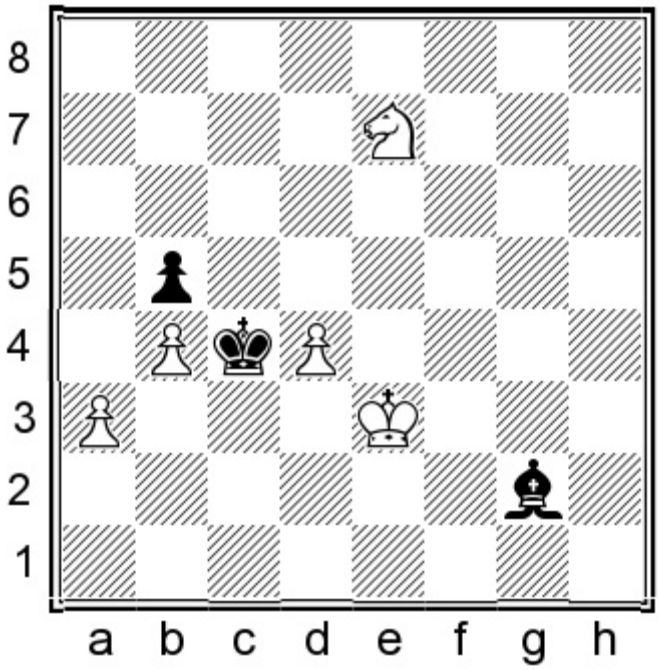
55...♔e6?!

More precise is 55...♔d6! 56.♘c3 ♗xf3 57.♔xf6, retaining decent chances of salvation. This is because the capture of the d5-pawn has freed a path for the black king to the queenside, offering him counterplay.

56.♘c7+ ♔d7?!

56...♔d6, is again necessary. But the text move does surprisingly draw, despite losing another pawn!

57.♘xa6 ♗xf3 58.♔xf6 ♔d6 59.♔f5 ♔d5 60.♔f4 ♗h1 61.♔e3 ♔c4 62.♘c5 ♗c6 63.♘d3 ♗g2 64.♘e5+ ♔c3 65.♘g6 ♔c4 66.♘e7



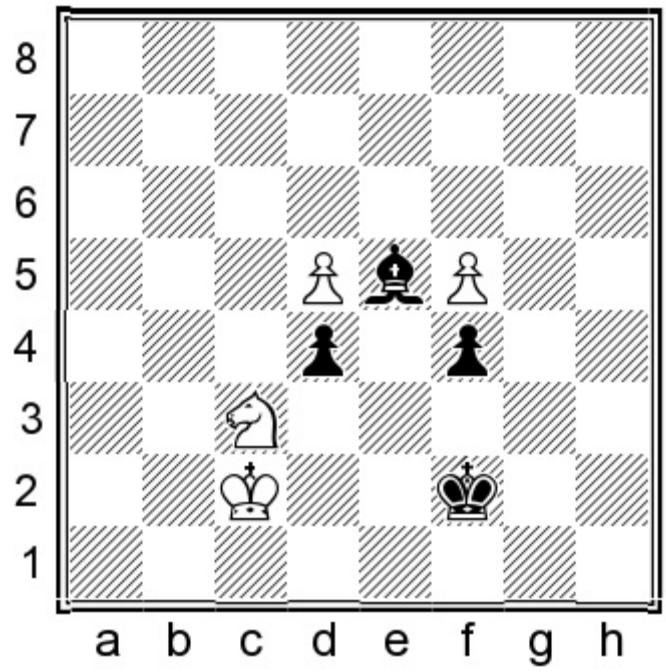
66...♗b7?

According to many sources this is Black's final mistake. Instead, with 66...♗h1!, he could have drawn — although this is easier said than done!

67.♘f5 ♗g2?! 68.♘d6+ ♔b3 69.♘xb5 ♔a4 70.♘d6 1–0

EXERCISE 28
Halkias Stelios
Tate Alan
A34 Tromso 2014

60.♔f7



EVALUATION

A difficult ending to defend; my bishop is passive and my opponent will slowly but surely kick me back, winning material. The only way to fight is to get active, penetrating on the queenside. But when is the appropriate moment to do that?

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Penetration on the queenside is my primary object but I think that this is not the right moment. I should first opt for **60...♔d6 61.♘e8+ ♔d7 62.♘g7 ♗e3 63.♘f5 ♗g5 64.♔g6 ♗d2**, when I will ready for my penetration.

PLAN B

Counterplay cannot wait and I should quickly opt for it. My king should gain activity and attack the opponent pawns from behind, so good seems to be **60...♔b6 61.♔e6 ♔a5 62.♔d5 ♔a4!** (a clever move! The 'obvious' **62...♔b4?**, is losing to **63.♘d7 ♔c3 64.♘xc5+–**) **63.♘d7 ♔b4**, when I think that I am safe.

PLAN C

I feel that I should react as in Plan A, with a small difference. After **60...♔d6 61.♘e8+ ♔d7 62.♘g7**, I should opt for the immediate penetration of my king with **62...♔c6 63.♔e6 ♔b6 64.♔d5 ♔a5 65.♘e6 ♔b4 66.♘f8 ♔c3 67.♘d7 ♔d3**, reaching a drawn position.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 28

Plan A is not bad as Black can draw after (**64.♔g6**) **64...♗d8!**, while **64...♗d2?**, is losing. If you noticed this detail you can earn the points — see the game.

Plan B is good and draws.

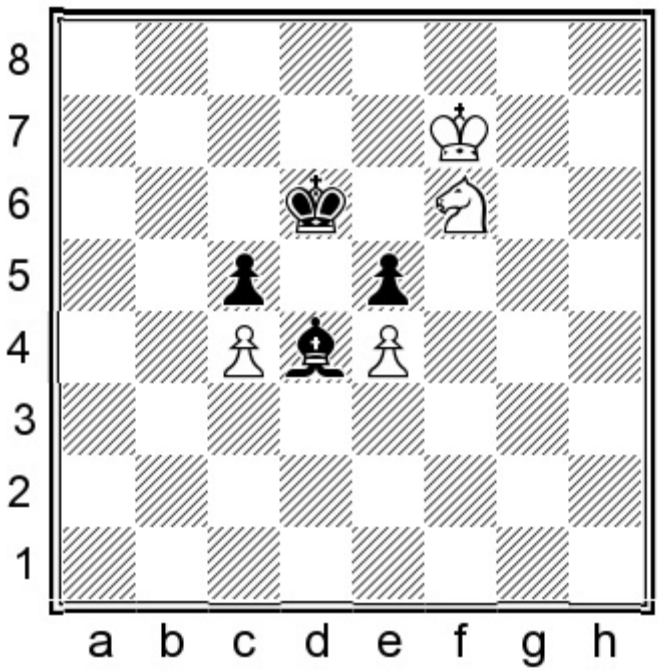
Plan C is best.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
40	**45**	**50**

60...♔d6

Also good is 60...♔b6 61.♔e6 ♔a5 62.♔d5 ♔a4! (62...♔b4? 63.♘d7 ♔c3 64.♘xc5+–) 63.♘d7 ♔b4=.

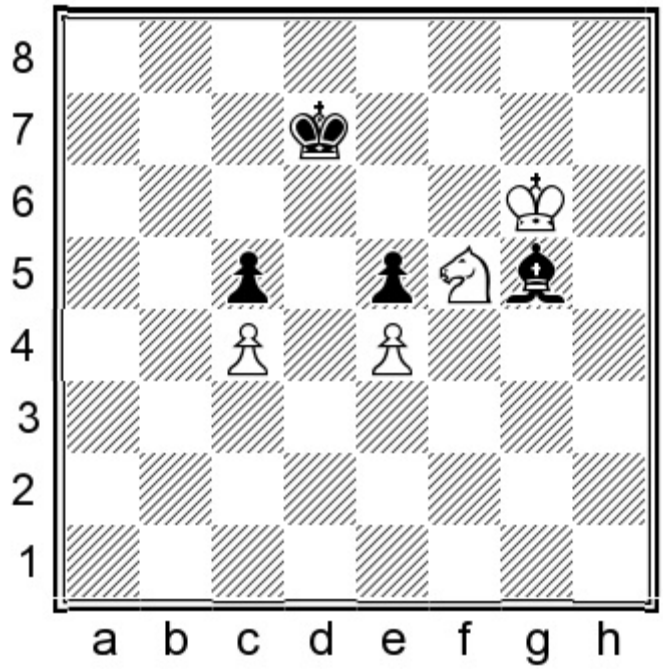
60...♔d6



61.♘e8+ ♔d7 62.♘g7 ♗e3

The text is not losing but more accurate seems to be 62...♔c6 63.♔e6 ♔b6 64.♔d5 ♔a5 65.♘e6 ♔b4 66.♘f8 ♔c3 67.♘d7 ♔d3=.

63.♘f5 ♗g5 64.♔g6



64...♗d2?

This loses. After 64...♗d8!, White cannot control Black's counterplay: 65.♘g7 (65.♘h6 ♔e6 66.♘f7 ♗a5 67.♘g5+ ♔e7 68.♔f5 ♗c3 69.♘f3 ♔d6 70.♔f6 ♗d4 71.♘g5 ♔c7! 72.♘f7 ♔b6 73.♘xe5 ♔a5 74.♔e6 ♔b4=) 65...♗h4 66.♔f5 ♗f2 67.♘e6 ♗d4 68.♘g5 ♔e7 69.♘f3 ♔d6 70.♔f6 ♔d7!, with a draw.

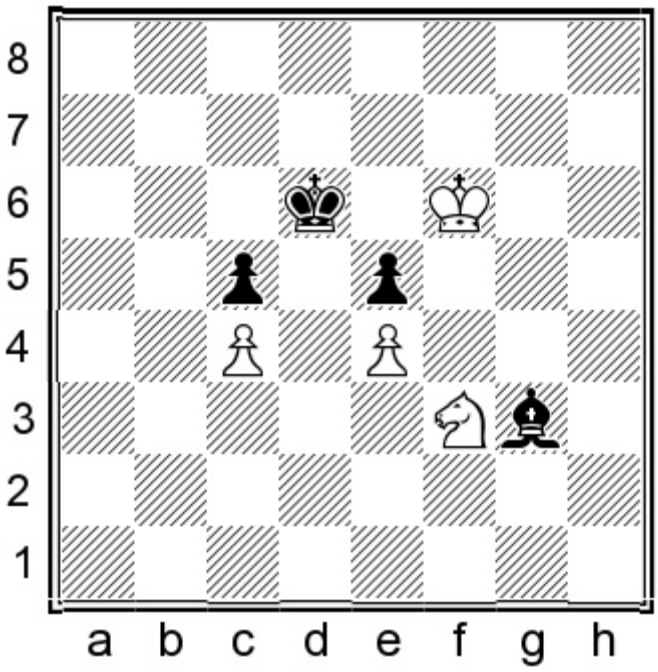
65.♔f6 ♗f4

65...♗c3, will be met by 66.♘h6! and Black is one tempo too slow: 66...♔c6 67.♔e6 ♔b6 68.♔d5 ♗d4 69.♘f7 ♔a5 70.♘xe5+–.

66.♘h4 ♗g3

66...♔d6, loses to 67.♘g6 ♗g3 68.♘h8 ♗h4+ 69.♔f5.

67.♘f3 ♔d6



68.♘g5!

This typical manoeuvre overloads the defence.

68...♗h4 69.♔f5 ♔c6

69...♗g3 70.♘f7++–, or 69...♗xg5 70.♔xg5 ♔e6 71.♔g6 ♔e7 72.♔f5 ♔d6 73.♔f6 ♔d7 74.♔xe5+–.

70.♘f3 ♗f2 71.♘xe5+

Also good is 71.♔e6 ♔b6 72.♔d5+–.

71...♔b6

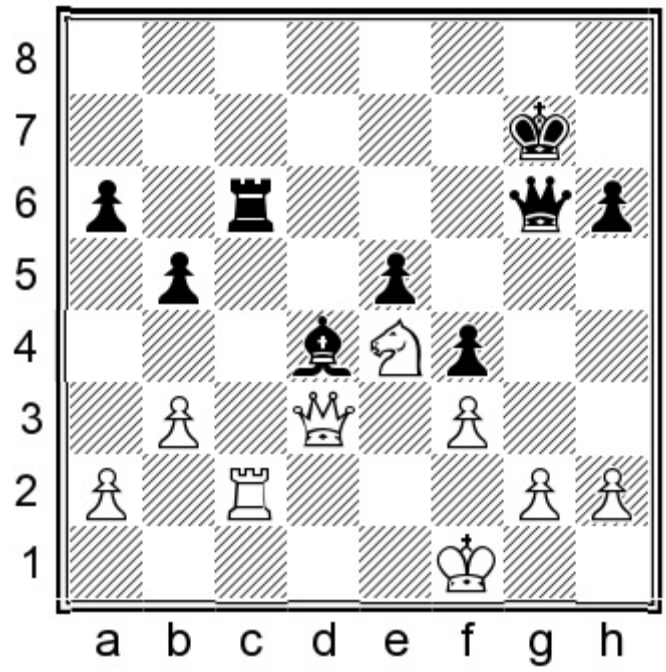
71...♔d6 72.♘d3 ♗h4 73.e5+ ♔c6 74.♔e6 ♗d8 75.♘f2 ♗h4 76.♘e4 ♗d8 77.♔f7 ♔b6 78.e6 ♔a5 79.e7 ♗xe7 80.♔xe7 ♔b4 81.♘d2 ♔c3 82.♔d6 ♔xd2 83.♔xc5+–.

72.♘d3 ♗h4 73.♔e6 ♗g5 74.♔d7

And Black resigned due to 74...♔a5 75.e5 (75.♘xc5 ♔b4 76.♘e6+–) 75...♔a4 76.e6 ♔b3 77.♘e5 ♔c3 78.e7 ♗xe7 79.♔xe7 ♔d4 80.♔d6+–. **1–0**

EXERCISE 29
Anand Viswanathan
Radjabov Teimour
B33 Linares 2009

36...h6



EVALUATION

My ending seems to be quite preferable. I have a better minor piece, strongly placed on the e4 outpost, while the black bishop is doing little. Also the combination of ♕+♔ vs ♕+♗ (rooks will be sooner or later exchanged) is to my favour, as I can emerge combined activity in every square. But of course I should further improve my position.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

My g2-pawn is Black's only chance for counterplay, so I should improve it! So, I should go for **37.g4 fxg3** (obligatory, as otherwise I would also have a 2:1 pawn majority on the kingside as well) **38.hxg3** and my pawn structure is further improved, while Black's has weakened.

PLAN B

Creating further weaknesses on the queenside seems to be a pleasant feature. So, I could opt for **37.a4**. After either **37...bxa4 38.bxa4 ♕e6** or **37...h5 38.axb5 axb5 39.g3**, my advantage looks strong.

PLAN C

Gaining the c-file and penetrating with the queen, seems to increase my advantage. So, I must opt for **37.♕d2 ♕e6 38.♕c1 ♖xc2 39.♕xc2**, when I have gained the c-file, while preserving all my possibilities alive (a4, g4).

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 29

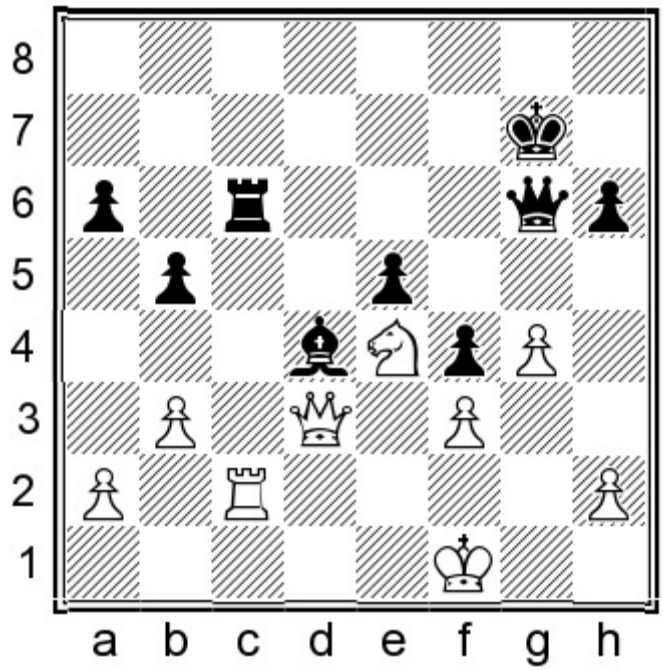
Plan A is best — see the game.

Plan B is OK, but Black obtains targets as well.

Plan C is OK as well, but not as strong as Plan A.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**35**	**35**

37.g4!



White's g2-pawn was Black's only chance for counterplay but now even this is gone!

37...fxg3

Obligatory, as otherwise White would also have a 2:1 pawn majority on the kingside.

38.hxg3 ♕e6 39.♔g2 ♕c8 40.♖xc6 ♕xc6 The smoke has cleared and White dominates the board. This is a clear case where ♕+♘ dominates ♕+♗. Actually, Black's bishop does not seem badly placed, but in fact it attacks nothing and has no targets at all. Moreover, it stands remotely from the defence of its king! White has a clear plan: to attack the opponent's king with g4, followed by ♘g3.

41.♕d2 ♕e6

Black would love to play 41...h5, but this fails to 42.♕g5+ ♕g6 43.♕e7+ ♕f7 44.♕d6 ♕g6 45.♕d7+ ♕f7 46.♕c6 ♕g6 47.♘d6, winning material.

42.g4 ♕c6

Black has nothing better than to await his destiny. The centralised bishop on d4 is completely out of play!

43.♘g3 ♔h7 44.♘f5 ♗b6 45.♕d3 ♔h8 46.♕e2 ♗c7 47.♕d2 ♔h7

47...e4?, runs into mate after 48.♕d4+.

48.♘e7! ♕c5

No salvation was offered by 48...♕d6 49.♕c2+ ♔h8 50.♘f5 ♕b6 51.♕e4! (51.♘xh6? ♕xh6 52.♕xc7 ♕d2+=) 51...♕f6 52.♕a8++–.

49.♕d3+ ♔h8 50.♕d7!

Finally, White penetrates with both his pieces, which cooperate to create decisive threats.

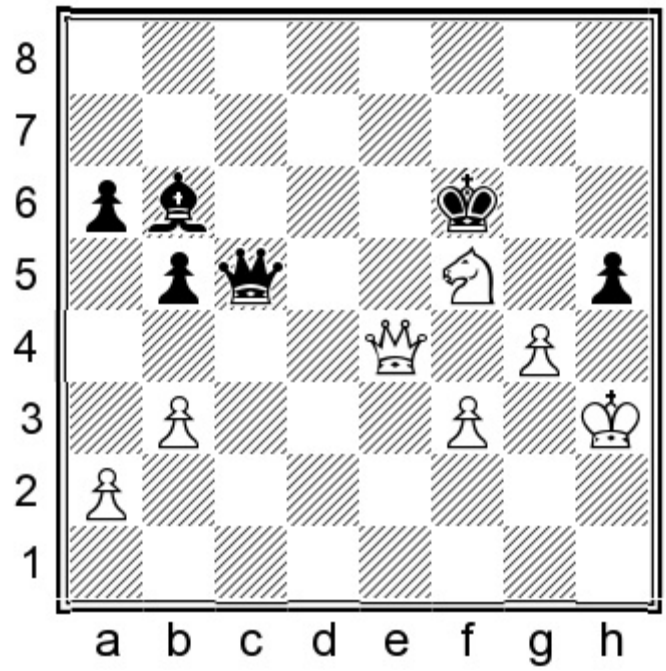
50...e4 51.♕e8+

The most accurate was 51.♔h3 exf3 52.♕e6! ♕g5 53.♕c8+, but the text move is the natural human decision.

51...♔g7 52.♘f5+ ♔f6 53.♕xe4 ♗b6 54.♔h3

54.♘g3 ♔f7 55.♔h3+–, was another good continuation.

54...h5



Of course many moves are winning, but from time to time a precise calculation is necessary!

55.g5+! ♔xg5

55...♔f7 56.g6+ ♔f6 57.g7 ♕g1 58.♕e7+ ♔xf5 59.♕f7+ ♔e5 60.g8=♕+–.

56.♘e7

All four white forces are fully cooperating against the black monarch.

56...♔f6

56...b4 57.♕h4+ ♔h6 58.♕f6+ ♔h7 59.♕g6+ ♔h8 60.♕g8#.

57.♘d5+ ♔g7

Or 57...♔f7 58.♕f5+ ♔e8 59.♕e6+ ♔d8 60.♕xb6+.

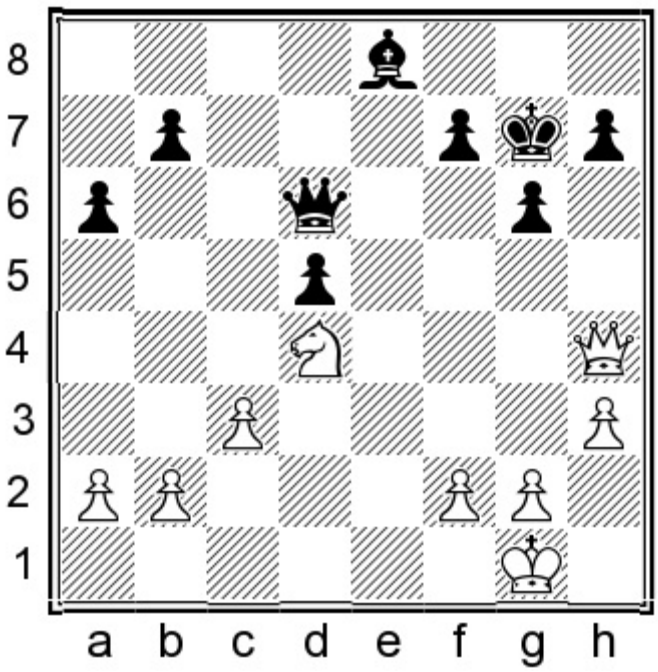
58.♕e5+ ♔h6 59.♕f6+ ♔h7 60.♕f7+! ♔h6 61.♘e7

Black resigned as White's threats are unstoppable.

1–0

EXERCISE 30
Cherniaev Alexander
Frolyanov Dmitry
B30 Krasnodar 2002

28...♗xe8



EVALUATION

Endings like this one are very difficult to defend for Black, but, on the other hand, I also don't have many resources for winning. I am enjoying the advantages of space, better pawn structure and good knight against bad bishop, but I must be wary of risking too much, since Black has some ideas to disturb my plans. These ideas are connected with advancing of his d-pawn and opening up his bishop, creating dangerous threats against my king. A potential queen exchange leads to drawn endings, as

Black has only one weakness; the d5-pawn. So, I must positively combine my forces (queen and knight) in order to achieve my task.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I need a pawn break and this is best done by **29.f4**, intending to advance it on f5 at a certain moment. After **29...♕f6 30.♕f2 ♕e7 31.♕d2**, my advantage remains strong.

PLAN B

No need to take immediate pawn actions for the moment. I should firstly improve the position of my queen and this is best done by **29.♕g5 ♗d7 30.♕e3**. Then I will try to improve my king and my pawn structure in the kingside.

PLAN C

My knight vs bishop endgame is far superior, so exchanging queens by **30.g4 h6 31.♕g3 ♕xg3 32.fxg3**, should suit me, as I can then play for two results (win or draw), with almost no risk.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 30

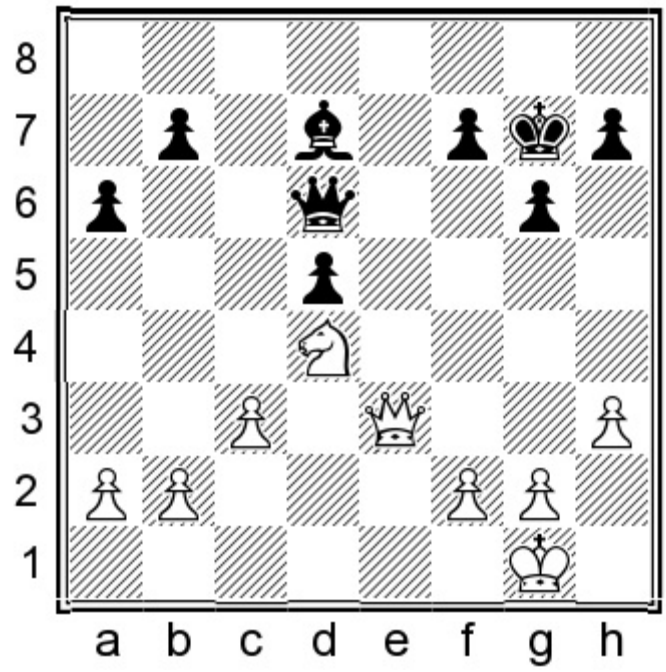
Plan A is not necessary — pawns are not going back — at least for the moment.

Plan B is best — see the game.

Plan C is giving White near to nothing, as Black can defend, having just one weakness.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
30	**50**	**15**

29.♕g5 ♗d7 30.♕e3



30...h5?!

I do not really like this advance. Black just moved another one of his pawns onto a square of the colour of his bishop and, as pawns tend not to move backwards, this is a permanent disadvantage.

31.h4!

Making sure that the h5-pawn will go nowhere!

31...♗e6 32.g3 ♗d7 33.♔g2 ♔g8 34.♕g5

White is waiting for the end of the first time-control (40 moves) before looking for a concrete plan. This is a sound practical approach, as time is part of the game!

34...♔g7 35.♕e3 ♔g8 36.♔g1 ♔g7 37.♔h2 ♔g8 38.♘e2 ♕f6 39.♘f4?!

I do not like this plan. White's knight must stay on d4.

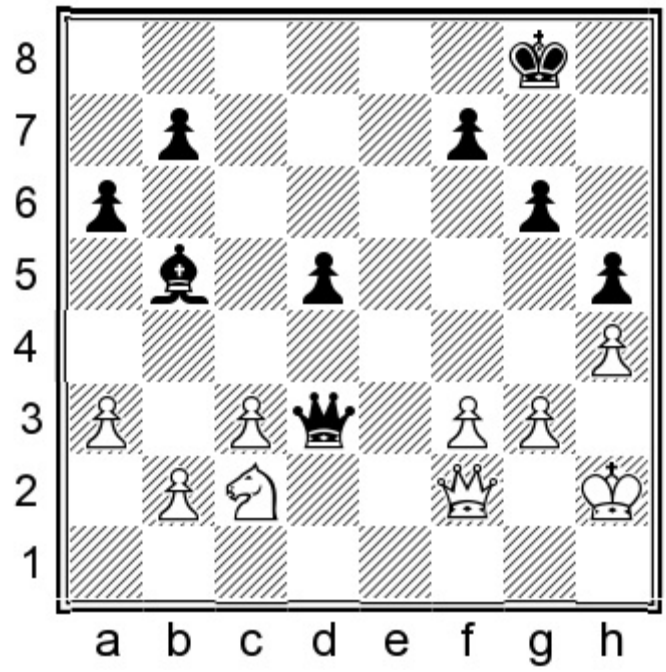
39...♗c6 40.a3 ♕f5! 41.♕e2 ♕b1 42.♘g2 ♕c1

Black must stay active. In this way he can keep White's advantage to a minimum.

43.f3

Now White is forced to weaken his king, as otherwise he can make no progress.

43...♗b5 44.♕f2 ♕d1 45.♘e3 ♕d3 46.♘c2



46...♗d7

I don't see any reason to avoid 46...♕e2, but anyway Black is not in any danger, due to the weak white king.

47.♘d4 ♕d1 48.♔g2 ♕c1 49.♕c2 ♕e1

Black will suffer a bit after 49...♕xc2+ 50.♘xc2, but of course it is a draw.

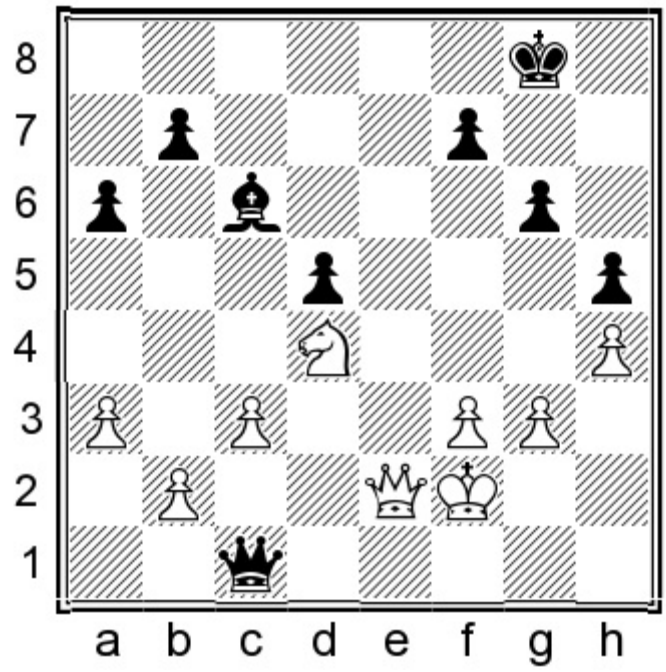
50.♕e2 ♕c1 51.♘b3 ♕b1 52.♕d2 ♕f5

52...♗b5 53.♘d4 ♗d7=, was good enough.

53.♕f2 ♕b1 54.♘d4 ♕c1 55.♕e2 ♕b1 56.♕d2 ♗c6 57.♕c2 ♕e1 58.♕e2 ♕c1

Both sides were doing nothing during the last few moves, but now White found a plan: to involve his king in the action by advancing him via the dark squares! Here we see a good plan in such positions: the inclusion of the king in the attack, directly against the opponent's king or just any other target.

59.♔f2!



59...♗d7?!

Black did not see what was coming. He should have played 59...♗a4!.

60.♘b3! ♕b1 61.♔e3 ♗b5

61...♕f5!?, was interesting: 62.♘d4 ♕h3 63.♔f4 ♗c6 64.♕e7 ♕g2, but still White would holds the advantage: 65.b3 ♕d2+ 66.♕e3 ♕h2 67.a4.

62.♕d2 ♕g1+

62...♔g7 63.♘d4 ♗d7 64.♔f4.

63.♔f4 ♕b6 64.♕d4 ♕c6

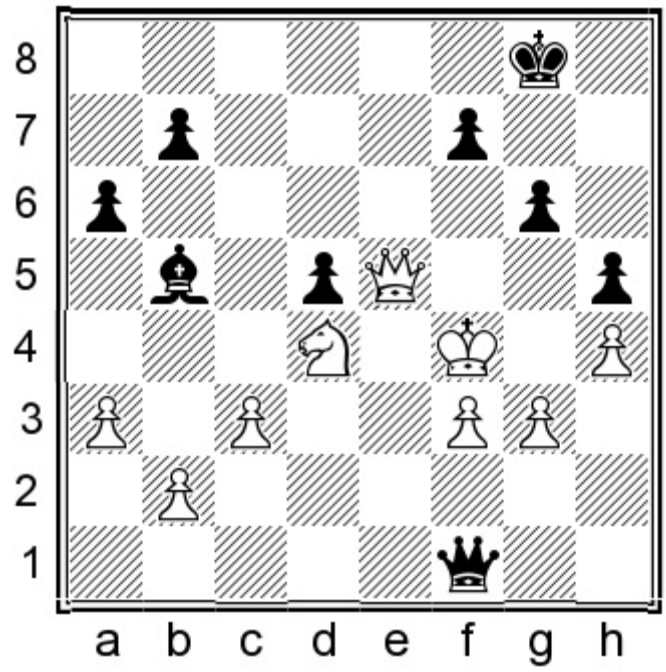
White stands better even after 64...♕d8 65.♕e5 ♗e8 66.♔e3.

65.♕e5 ♕c4+?!

Black completely loses the thread. 65...♕b6, was forced, although White has 66.♘d4 ♗c6 67.♔g5! ♕d8+ 68.♕f6 ♕f8 69.♔f4±.

66.♘d4 ♕f1?

Again, 66...♗d7, was better: 67.♕b8+ ♗c8 68.♕d6 ♗h3 69.♔g5±.



67.♔g5!

White uses his king in the attack. Actually, it is now three pieces against a lonely king!

67...♕c1+ 68.f4

A picturesque position. All of White's forces are placed on dark squares and (nearly) all of Black's forces are placed on light squares.

68...♕xb2

The loss of a pawn is unimportant, as the black monarch will not escape his fate...

69.♕b8+ ♔g7

69...♔h7 70.♕xb7 ♔g8 71.♔f6+–.

70.♘e6+!

Strategic superiority gives birth to tactical solutions!

70...fxe6

70...♔h7 71.♕f8 fxe6 72.♕f7+ ♔h8 73.♔h6.

71.♕c7+ ♗d7

71...♔g8 72.♔f6+–.

72.♕xd7+ ♔f8 73.♕d8+ ♔f7 74.♕c7+

And Black resigned due to 74...♔e8 75.♔f6.

1–0

Show in Text Mode

MIXED PIECES POWER

The study of the endgames is considered to be the main subject of improvement in chess. But we could also think of it from another point of view.

Once we have passed the stage which by move 25 we have not blundered a piece, most of our games reach move 40 or more... it becomes clear that the result of the game will be decided in the endgame!

One of the big disadvantages of our modern times is that everything must be done in a rush, so also chess games suffer from shortened time controls.

This means that when we reach the endgame we often are quite short on time. Consequently, in order to win one must nurture the knowledge of different kind of endgames, especially of these that are a bit more ‘complex’, with more pieces on the board.

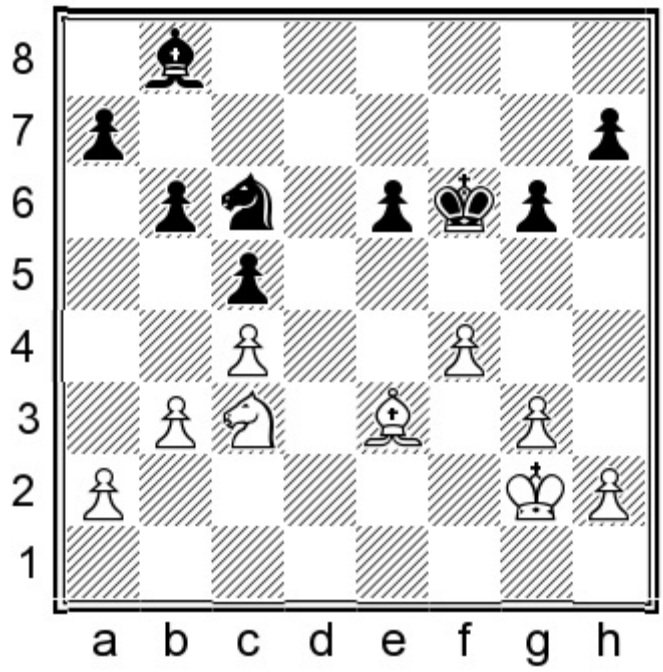
The minor pieces endings are complex and have many hidden ideas and resources and obviously are not so ‘simple’ compared to one-to-one cases.

SOS Tip 1 — Guidelines

1. Piece cooperation is of a high value.
2. Targets should be revealed or created.
3. The kings play an important role.
4. Don’t rush!

EXERCISE 31
Smyslov Vassily
Golombek Harry
B24 London 1947

29...♘c6



EVALUATION

My advantage is minimal and consists of the better-to-be strong king position in the centre, while my bishop is more active than Black's, which is rather shut-in at b8. The slight separation of the kingside pawns makes Black's task a bit more difficult. Nevertheless, my opponent can defend.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I need to start my expanding on the kingside and for this good seems to be the advance **30.g4**. After something like **30...e5 31.♘d5+ ♔e6 32.♔f3 exf4 33.♗xf4**, my central pieces placement should preserve my minimal advantage.

PLAN B

I think that I should start by pushing the enemy king back by **30.♘e4+ ♔f5 31.♔f3 h5 32.h3 e5 33.g4+ hxg4+ 34.hxg4+ ♔e6 35.♘g5+ ♔e7 36.f5**. Then I will improve my king, preserving my minimal but stable advantage.

PLAN C

There is no need for piece improvement before I centralise my king, which is the most important feature in endgames. So, I will opt for **30.♔f3 e5 31.fxe5+ ♔xe5 32.♗f4+ ♔e6 33.♗xb8 ♘xb8 34.♔e4**, where my advantage should have been kept to the minimum, but it is still alive.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 31

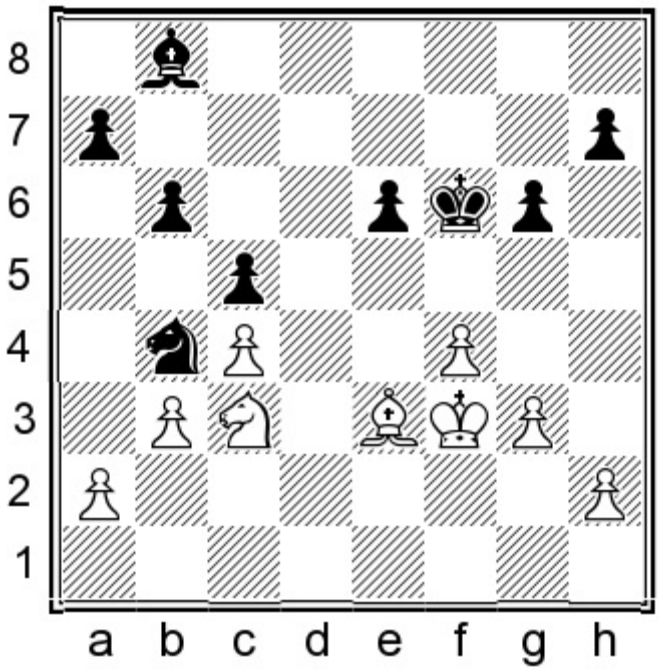
Plan A is not much, but it is playable.

Plan B is quite similar to Plan A.

Plan C is best, but gives not much to White as well — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
40	**40**	**50**

30.♔f3 ♘b4?!



No need for such moves! Black had to opt for 30...e5 31.fxe5+ ♔xe5 32.♗f4+ ♔e6 33.♗xb8 ♘xb8 34.♔e4, where White's advantage should have been kept to the minimum.

31.♗d2! ♔e7

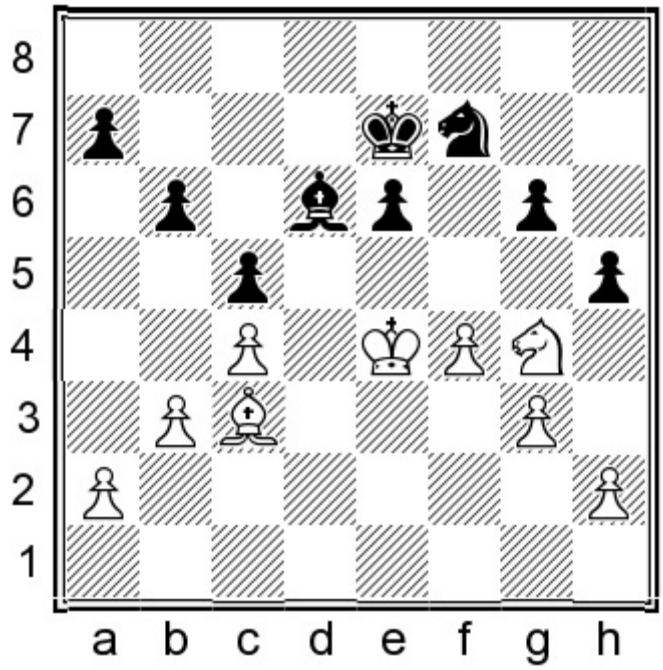
Black continues his waiting policy, but 31...e5 32.fxe5+ ♗xe5 33.♘d5+ ♘xd5 34.cxd5 ♗d6 35.♔e4 ♔e7, should be again holdable for him.

32.♔e4 ♘c6 33.♘d1!

The c3-square is freed to let the bishop take the important diagonal a1-h8, while the knight sets-off to g4, to attack the enemy pawns. White doesn't fear of 33...e5, since he would answer it by 34.f5 and

then find it easier to create a passed pawn on the kingside. Moreover, Black's central position would thereby be weakened — the d5-square.

33...♗d6 34.♘f2 ♘d8 35.♗c3 ♘f7 36.♘g4 h5



37.♗f6+!

An important intermediate move. In order to exploit a pawn weakness you have to fix it. With this aim, White establishes his bishop on f6, where it will anticipate a possible active line by Black based on ...g5.

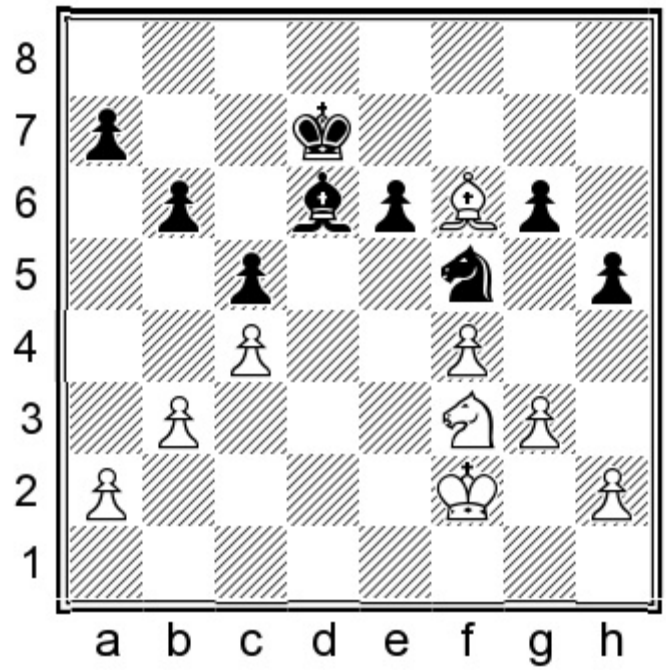
37...♔d7 38.♘f2 ♗c7

V.Smyslov suggests 38...♗e7 39.♗c3 ♗d6 40.♘d3 ♔e7±, as improvement for Black.

39.♘d3 ♔c6 40.♘e1

Another fine manoeuvre; the knight is heading for h4, to attack the weak pawn on g6.

40...♘d6+ 41.♔d3 ♘f5 42.♘f3 ♔d7 43.♔e4 ♘d6+ 44.♔e3 ♘f5+ 45.♔f2 ♗d6



46.h3!

Having fixed the weaknesses on e6 and g6, White now settles down to the culmination of the attack on the kingside pawns.

46...♗c7 47.g4 hxg4 48.hxg4 ♘h6 49.♔g3 ♘f7

49...♔e8, is not really an improvement: 50.♗e5 ♗d8 51.♗b8 a6 52.♘e5 g5 53.fxg5 ♗xg5 54.a4+–.

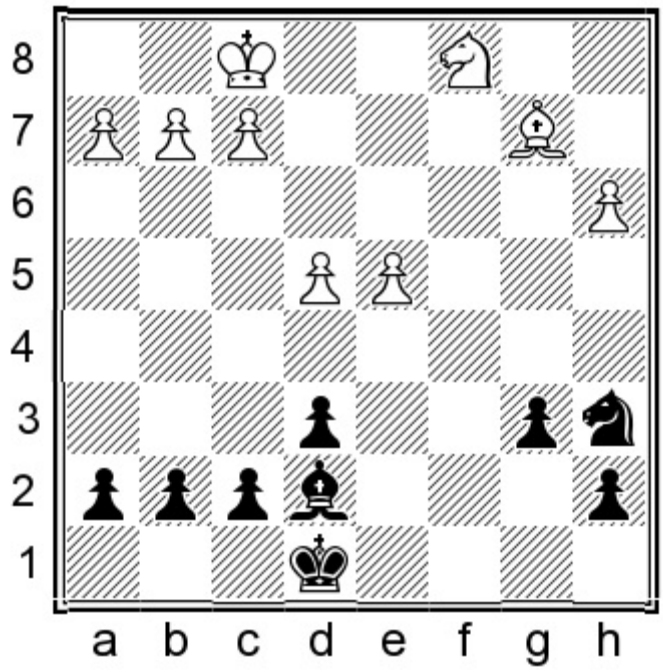
50.g5! ♗d8

Black's position is now indefensible, since if 50...♘d6, then 51.♘e5++–.

51.♔g4 ♗xf6 52.gxf6 ♔d6 53.♘e5 1–0

EXERCISE 32
Malaniuk Vladimir
Ehlvest Jaan
E12 Minsk 1987

24.♘xc1



EVALUATION

I face no problems and I can say that I feel that my chances are even better, mainly due to the possibility of creating an outside passed pawn, thanks to my queenside 2:1 pawn majority. But of course there are many things to be done firstly and I should cope with them.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I should always think of how to make weaknesses in White's camp or improve my pieces. There is something good here by **24...e5**, when White must make a difficult decision. After **25.♘b3** (worst is **25.d5 ♘c5 26.f3 f6∓**) **25...exd4 26.♘xd4 ♘c5**, I have demolished White's centre, while my knight has got the excellent c5-square.

PLAN B

There is nothing extraordinary to do for the time being, so I should move my king to the centre and re-shuffle my pieces, looking out for improvements. **24...♔d7 25.♔e2 ♔c6 26.♔d3 ♘c7**.

PLAN C

Of course, without creating further weaknesses it would be difficult to prevail. I think that I can go for **24...f5 25.f3** (if **25.exf5 exf5** and White emerges with two weaknesses on d5 and a3 — in this case the passed d-pawn is a minus, as White can just defend it and not benefit from it) **25...fxe4 26.fxe4 e5 27.♘b3** (**27.dxe5 ♘c5**) **27...exd4 28.♘xd4**, when I have succeeded to create weaknesses in the white camp (e4-a3).

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 32

Plan A is fine and it is playable.

Plan B is not much as there are two better plans!

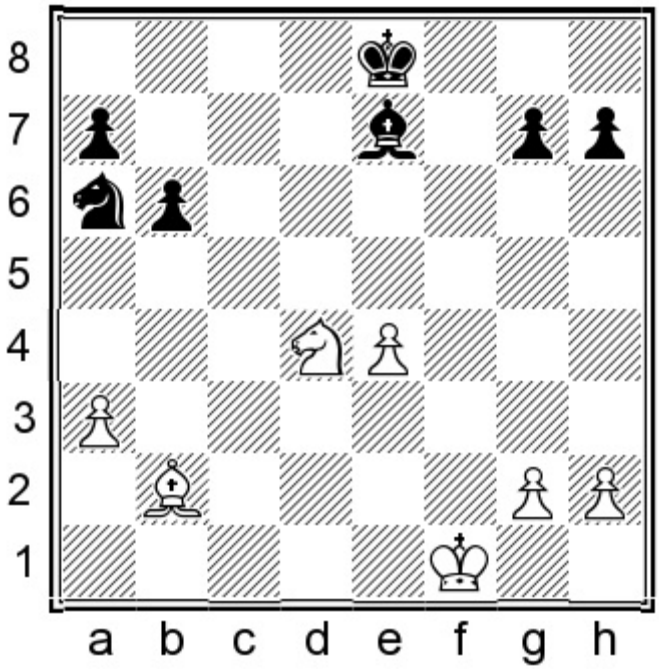
Plan C is best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
40	**30**	**50**

24...f5! 25.f3 fxe4 26.fxe4 e5! 27.♘b3

After 27.dxe5 ♘c5, Black regains his pawn and the white passed e-pawn is a mere weakness as well.

27...exd4 28.♘xd4

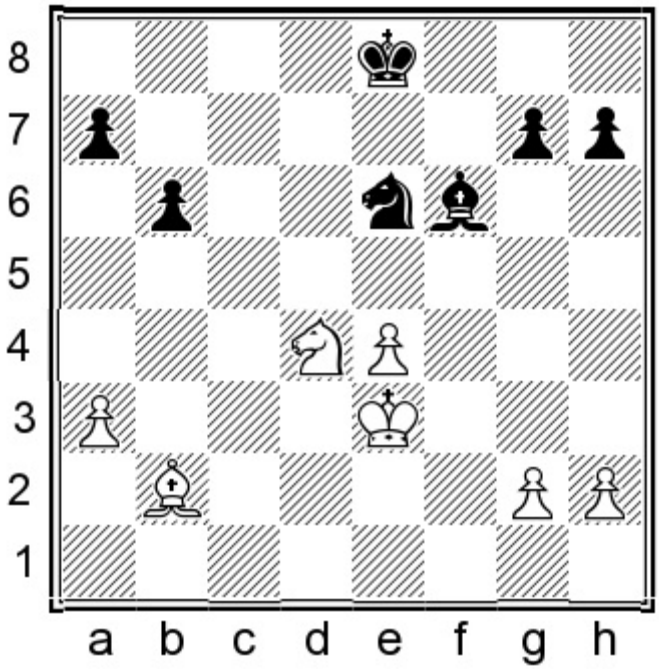


Black succeeded to create weaknesses in the white camp (e4-a3). Now he must improve his pieces and then activate his own passed pawn on the queenside.

28...♗f6

28...♘c5? 29.♘c6=.

29.♔e2 ♘c5 30.♔e3 ♘e6!



31.♘xe6

If White stays put with 31.♗c3, then after 31...♘xd4 32.♗xd4 ♔f7! (32...♗xd4+? 33.♔xd4 and it is White who is winning!), he stands no chance: 33.e5 (33.♗xf6 ♔xf6 34.♔d4 ♔e6 35.g3 h5 36.♔c4 a6 37.♔d4 ♔d6 38.e5+ ♔e6–+) 33...♗e7 34.a4 ♔e6 35.♔e4 ♗c5 36.♗b2 a6 and the outside passed pawn will decide. A sample variation is 37.h3 b5 38.axb5 axb5 39.♗c1 b4 40.♗b2 ♗f2 41.♔d3 ♗g3 42.♔e4 ♗e1 43.♔d3 ♗c3 44.♗xc3 bxc3 45.♔xc3 ♔xe5–+.

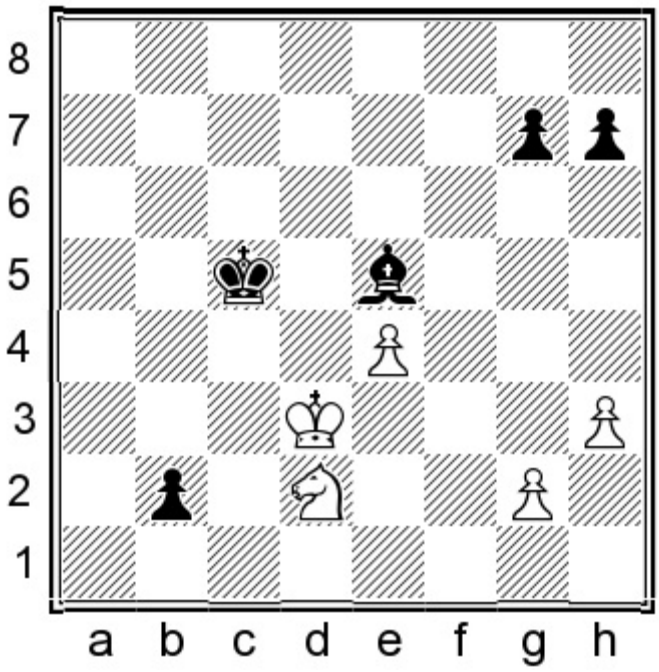
31...♗xb2 32.a4 ♔e7 33.♘c7 ♗e5 34.♘d5+ ♔d6

Black is plain winning. He has a good bishop vs bad knight endgame, plus his future outside passed pawn.

35.h3 ♔c5 36.♔d3 a6 37.♘e3 b5 38.axb5 axb5!

38...♔xb5?!, looks ‘better’ as the black passed pawn will be on the a- rather in the b-file. But here White could have counterplay with 39.♘c4.

39.♘d5 b4 40.♘e3 b3 41.♘c4 b2 42.♘d2



42...h5!

Black's plan now is to attack the kingside pawns with his king, but first advances his pawns so they will be closer to queening.

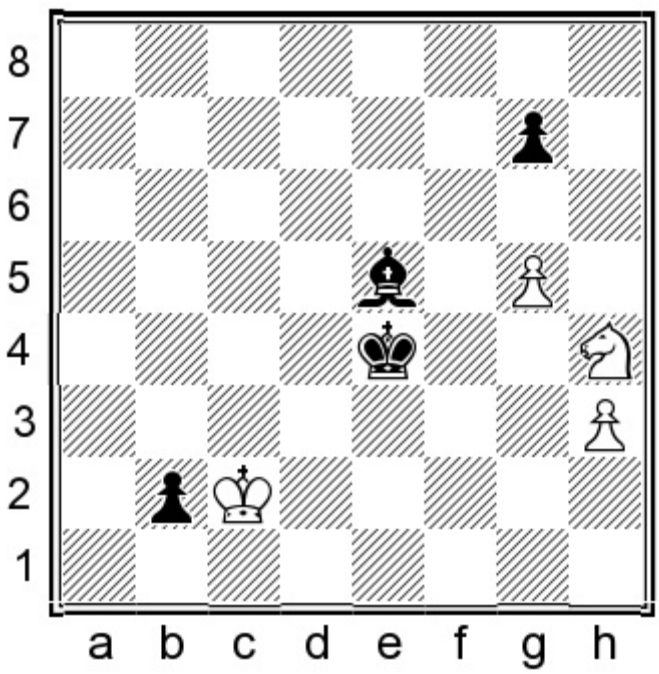
43.g4 ♗f4 44.♘b1 h4 45.♔c3 ♗e5+ 46.♔d3 ♗d4 47.♘d2 ♗f6 48.♔c2

Or 48.♘b1 ♔d6 49.♔e3 ♔e5 50.♘a3 ♗g5+ and the black king penetrates.

48...♔d4! 49.g5

If 49.♔xb2 then 49...♔d3+ 50.♔c1 ♗g5.

49...♗e5 50.♘f3+ ♔xe4 51.♘xh4



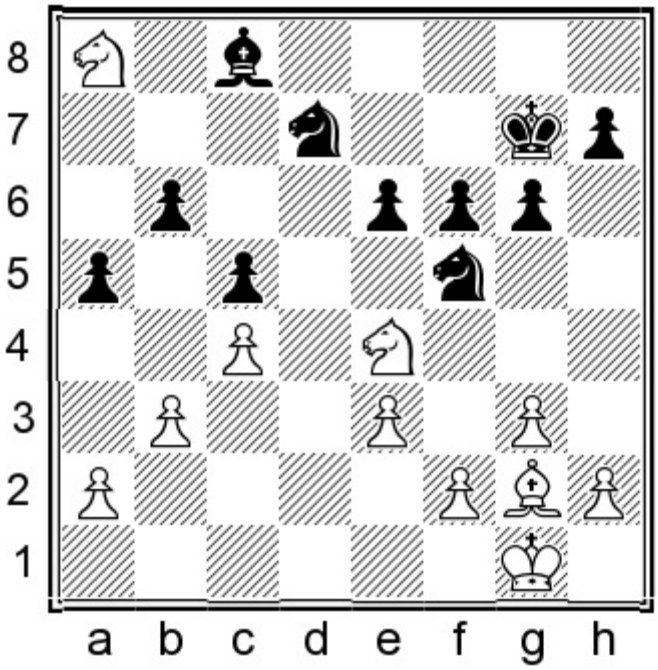
51...♗c3!

Black should avoid a last trick: 51...♔e3 52.g6 ♔f2 53.♘f5 ♔f3 54.♘e7 ♔g3 55.♘c6 ♗c3 56.♘d8 ♔xh3 57.♘f7 ♔h4 58.♘h8! and the position is drawn, as White cannot win the white g-pawn! Here White resigned due to 52.♘g2 (52.g6 ♗f6 53.♘g2 ♔f3 54.♘e1+ ♔e2 55.♘g2 ♗g5 56.♔xb2 ♔f2–+) 52...♔f3 53.♘h4+ ♔f4.

0–1

EXERCISE 33
Barcza Gedeon
Soos Bela
E60 Varna 1962

29...♘xd7



EVALUATION

The position looks quite drawish, due to the balanced pawn structure, but I feel that I can get the advantage if I am quick enough. Black's only minus here is his weak b6-pawn, which is already attacked by my edged knight, but there seems to be no more, at least at first sight.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Access on the d6-square should be fatal, so I should immediately go for **30.g4**, when Black should be accurate: **30...♗b7** (**30...♘e7 31.♘c7**, wins) **31.gxf5 ♗xa8 32.fxe6 ♘e5 33.♘d6 ♗xg2 34.♔xg2 ♔f8 35.♘c8 ♘d3 36.♘xb6 ♔e7**, where I have won a healthy pawn.

PLAN B

Preventing Black's intended ...♗b7 and preparing to attack the b6-pawn again with an extra piece, seems like the correct follow-up. Good looks **30.♘c3 ♘d6 31.♘a4**, where I feel that sooner or later my opponent's position will collapse.

PLAN C

My knights are carrying the day and I should make a good use of them! Square e6 is vulnerable as well and I should go for it: **30.♘c7 ♔f7** (**30...♘e5 31.♘e8+ ♔f8 32.♘8xf6±**) **31.g4 ♘g7 32.♘d6+ ♔e7 33.♘xc8+ ♔d8 34.♘xe6+ ♘xe6 35.♘d6** and I am a healthy pawn-up.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 33

Plan A is not bad, but it gives Black some chances — see the game.

Plan B is the best — see the game.

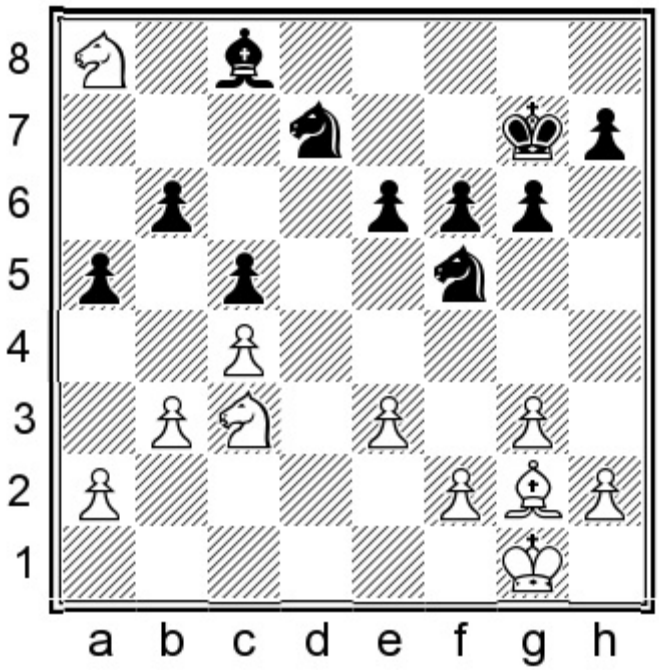
Plan C is not bad either, but still a bit inferior to Plan B.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
40	**50**	**45**

30.♘c3!

Preventing Black's intended ...♗b7 and preparing to attack the b6-pawn again with ♘a4. After 30.g4 ♗b7! 31.gxf5 ♗xa8 32.fxe6 ♘e5 33.♘d6 ♗xg2 34.♔xg2 ♔f8 35.♘c8 ♘d3 36.♘xb6 ♔e7!, despite White's material advantage, the knight ending is hard to win. Black's knight is very active and threatens ...♘c1, and even after 37.♘d5+ ♔xe6 38.♔f3 ♘c1 39.♘c3 ♔e5, the two black queenside pawns hold White's three. Black's activity would give him drawing chances here.

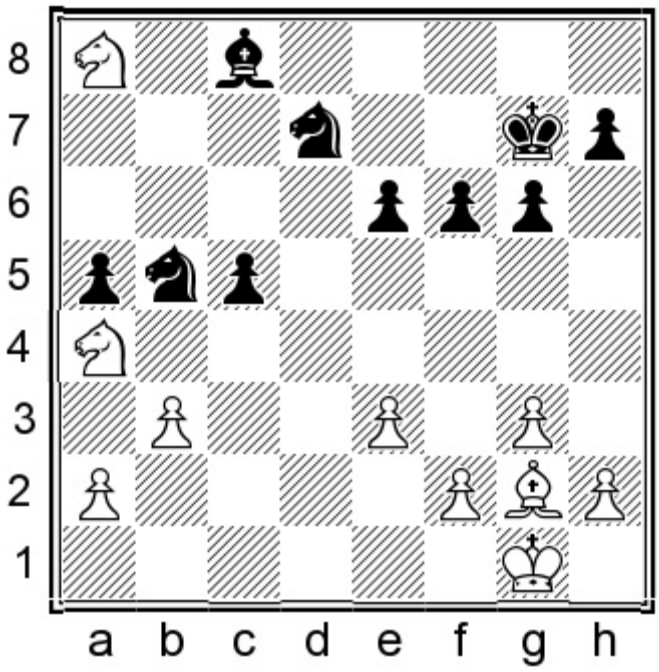
30.♘c3!



30...♘d6 31.♘a4

Winning the b-pawn by 31.♗c6 ♘e5 32.♗a4, is too dangerous after 32...♗b7 33.♘xb6 ♘f3+.

31...b5 32.cxb5 ♘xb5



33.♗c6!

But now, finally, White will win a pawn, in more promising circumstances.

33...♘d6 34.♗xd7 ♗xd7 35.♘xc5 ♗c6

Losing another pawn, but the theme of Black's bishop lacking squares is continued after 35...♗c8 36.♘b6, when the knights once again display their awesome power. After 36...♘b7 (36...♔f7 37.♘xc8 ♘xc8 38.♘b7, wins another pawn) 37.♘e4 (the bishop still has no squares!) 37...f5 38.♘d2 ♘d6

39.♘xc8 ♘xc8 40.♘c4, the a5-pawn drops as well, and White is winning.

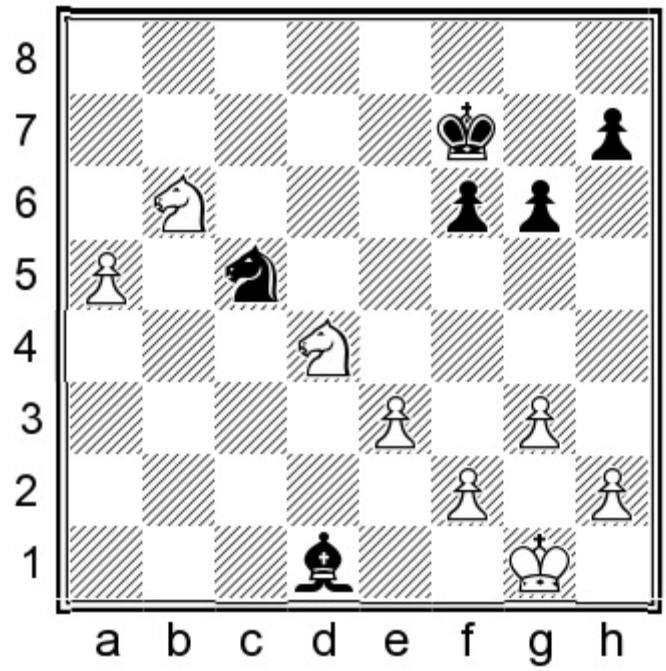
36.♘xe6+! ♔g8

36...♔f7? is impossible due to 37.♘d8+!.

37.♘b6

White's equine artistry has netted him two extra pawns and a winning endgame.

37...♘e4 38.♘d4 ♗e8 39.♘c4 a4 40.bxa4 ♗xa4 41.♘b6 ♗d1 42.a4 ♘c5 43.a5 ♔f7



44.f3!

A neat final touch. White shuts-off the bishop's path back into the game via g4. It is remarkable how, even at this late stage of the game, the black bishop finds itself dominated by White's knights.

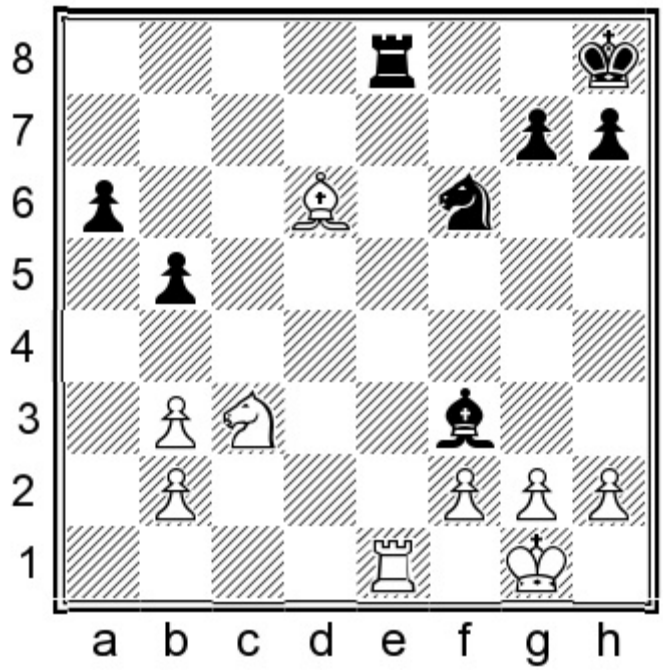
44...♔e8 45.♘d5 f5 46.♘c3 ♗a4 47.a6!

The final humiliation for Black's unfortunate prelate. The a-pawn costs the bishop its life.

1–0

EXERCISE 34
Boleslavsky Isaak
Kotov Alexander
D26 Zuerich 1953

23...♖e8



EVALUATION

I have a quite pleasant position, as I have won a pawn, but I have to make an important decision here. It is one of these famous positions where everything look good but the reality is a bit different... I have to draw a plan on how to benefit the outmost.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Passed pawns in endings is a good asset, so I can think of creating one. After **24.♖e3 ♖xe3 25.fxe3 ♗c6 26.♗e5**, I have succeeded in my idea. I will then centralise my king on d4 and push my passed e-pawn.

PLAN B

Exchanging pieces is a good asset when material up. So, I can go for the natural **24.♖xe8+ ♘xe8**, followed by the dominating **25.♗e5** (**25.gxf3? ♘xd6**, when I would suffer from a bad structure), which is a key move, leaving the black knight on e8 restricted for the rest of the game. Then my extra pawn will decide.

PLAN C

I need to preserve the rooks on the board, as this is the only way to apply pressure on the black a6 weakness. Going for **24.♖a1 ♗b7 25.f3**, I secure a clearly better ending with a pawn-up and all the pressure.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 34

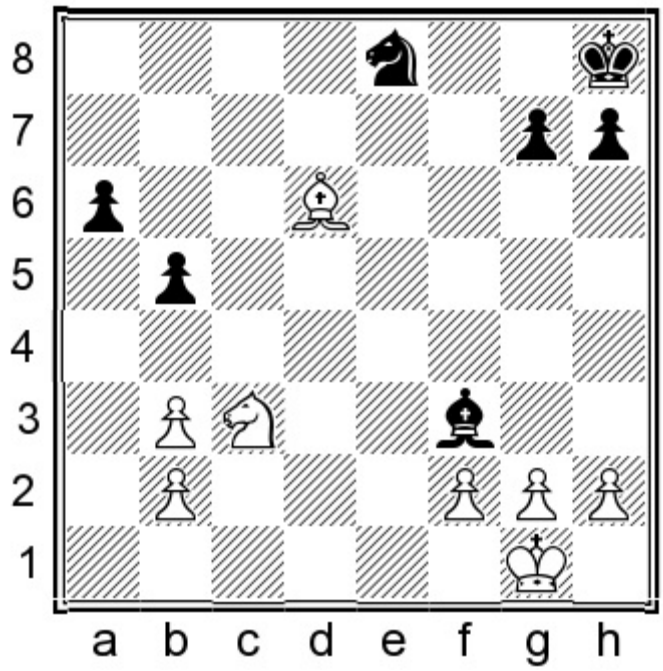
Plan A is bad, as after **26...♘e4**, Black almost secures the draw.

Plan B is the best — see the game.

Plan C is not so good, as the opposite-coloured bishops can help Black to a successful defence.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
0	**50**	**15**

24.♖xe8+ ♘xe8



25.♗e5!

A key move, which leaves the knight on e8 restricted for the rest of the game. In contrast, after 25.gxf3? ♘xd6, White would suffer from a bad structure.

25...♗c6 26.b4!

Fixing the weakness on a6.

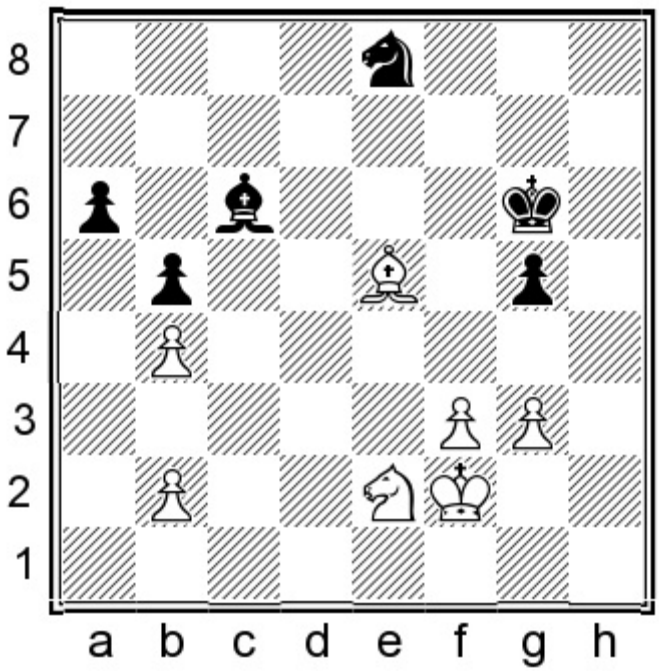
26...h5

Evidently, 26...♘f6, at any moment will be met by 27.♗xf6 gxf6 28.f3 and the knight vs bishop ending is easily won thanks to the extra pawn.

27.f3

The rest is relatively easy, as Black has no counterplay.

27...♔h7 28.♘e2 g5 29.♔f2 h4 30.g3 hxg3+ 31.hxg3 ♔g6



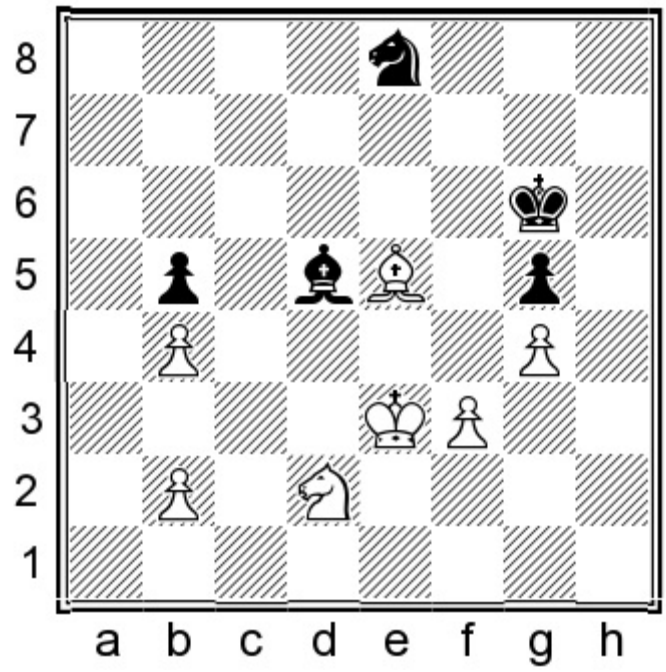
32.g4!

A move with several virtues: the enemy king is restricted, further pawn exchanges are avoided and a future target is created on g5.

32...♗b7 33.♔e3 ♗c6 34.♘c3 ♗b7 35.♘e4 ♗d5

Or 35...♗c8 36.♘c5 and both black pieces are dominated!

36.♘c5 ♔f7 37.♘xa6 ♔e6 38.♗c3 ♗a8 39.♘c5+ ♔f7 40.♘e4 ♔g6 41.♗e5 ♗d5 42.♘d2



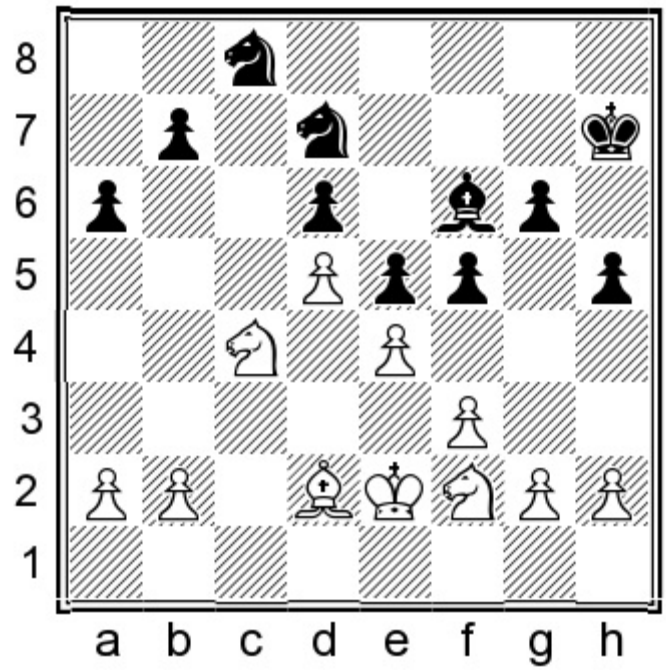
42...♔f7

Black resigned at the same time, in view of 43.♔d4 ♔e6 44.♘e4. It is a striking fact that the knight never left e8.

1–0

EXERCISE 35
Petrosian Tigran
Ivkov Borislav
A42 Bugojno 1982

24...♗f6



EVALUATION

I have obtained a dream ending from the 'King's Indian Defence', where the absence of the lightsquared bishops clearly suits me. I preserve a pleasant advantage and Black should stay passive, waiting for my moves and plans, but how to make progress?

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

The queenside is obviously in my interest and I should provoke weaknesses. For this good looks **25.♘a5 b6 26.♘c6 ♔g7 27.♗e3 ♔f7 28.♘d3 ♔e8 29.a4**, when my pieces have improved and the march of my king will follow.

PLAN B

I should create some threats and weaknesses in the black camp and I can start by **25.♗b4 ♗e7** and then I can go for **26.g3 ♔g7 27.h3**, planning g4, which will kill any potential black counterplay. Playing on both sides present the golden 'Rule of the two weaknesses'.

PLAN C

I feel that I have to expand on the queenside, where my pawn structure is flexible. **25.a4 ♔g7 26.b4**, seems to be a logical follow-up, gaining space and domination on this side. Later I will advance my king to the queenside, while Black will have to say put and observe my ideas.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 35

Plan A is the best — see the game.

Plan B is not much and it only helps Black to defend.

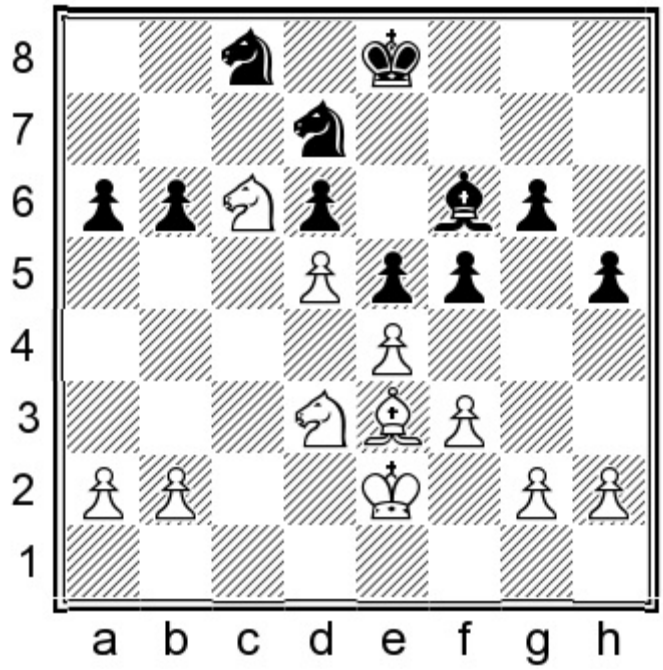
Plan C is a bit senseless...

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**15**	**5**

25.♘a5

Provoking new weaknesses. 25.♗b4 ♗e7, is less effective.

25.♘a5 b6 26.♘c6 ♔g7 27.♗e3 ♔f7 28.♘d3 ♔e8



29.a4!

After arranging his minor pieces in ideal positions, White launches a pawn advance to soften up the enemy queenside.

29...♗d8

After 29...♘c5 30.♘xc5 bxc5 31.b4! cxb4 32.♘xb4, the a-pawn is doomed and other moves let White

continue his plan by 30.a5, preparing ♘db4.

30.♘db4!

A new provocative measure, to weaken Black's light squares further.

30...a5 31.♘a2

The virtues of White's previous moves become evident: Black's queenside pawns have both been fixed on squares of the same colour as the bishops, and the white king can already consider an invasion along the f1-a6 diagonal.

31...f4

Without the lightsquared bishops on the board such an avalanche won't bring great success, but it is difficult to suggest anything better.

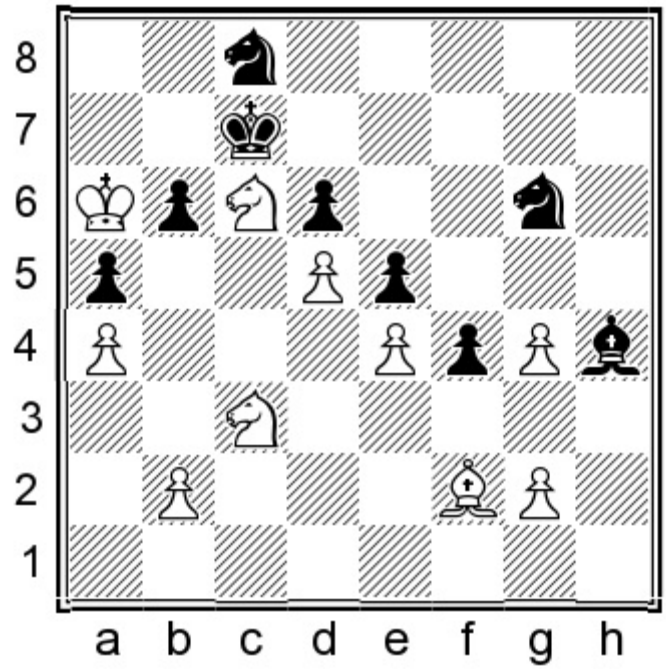
32.♗f2 g5 33.♔d3!

On the way to a6!

33...♘f8 34.h3 ♘g6 35.♘c3 ♗f6 36.♔c4! ♔d7 37.♔b5 ♔c7 38.♔a6!

The threat of 39.♘b5+, forces Black to a suicidal attack on the opposite flank.

38...g4 39.hxg4 hxg4 40.fxg4 ♗h4



41.♘d1!

Limiting the enemy counterplay. 41.♘b5+, would have been less technical, according to M.Shereshevsky.

41...♗xf2

Or 41...♗g3 42.♗xg3 fxg3 43.♘e3, winning.

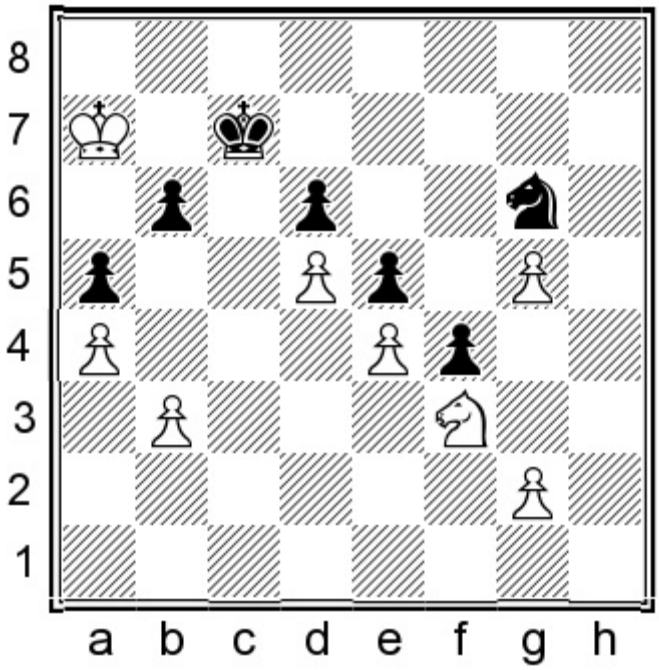
42.♘xf2 ♘ce7

After 42...♘h4 43.g5, the g2-pawn can't be taken and White decides matters by ♘h3-g1-f3.

43.♘xe7 ♘xe7 44.g5

With Black suffering on both flanks, the rest is easy.

44...♘g6 45.♘g4 ♘h4 46.♔a7 ♘g6 47.♘h2 ♘h4 48.♘f3 ♘g6 49.b3



Zugzwang!

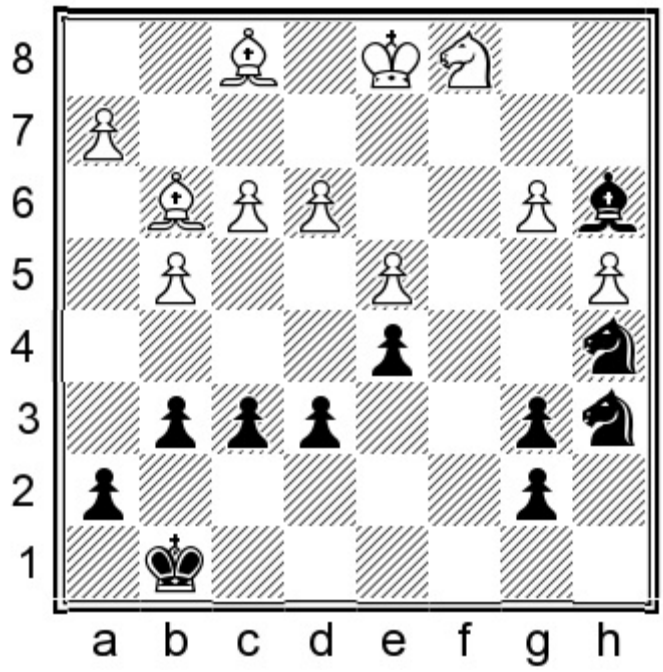
49...♘f8

Black resigned at the same time, without waiting for 50.♘h4.

1–0

EXERCISE 36
Botvinnik Mikhail
Bronstein David Ionovich
D71 Moscow 1951

35.♔d1



EVALUATION

My position seems to be more or less OK, but still I don't like my edged knights, neither do I like the white bishop pair which restricts my knight pair. White is on the pressure, but the closed position can be helpful to my efforts to hold the equilibrium.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I feel that the most important feature in this position is to preserve the centre closed, as much as I can and to try to exchange as many pawns as I can. Logical seems to be **35...f5**, followed by my king's centralisation.

PLAN B

My king has to be centralised as soon as it is possible, to support my central pawn structure, as White will try to attack it. So, I should opt for **35...♔f7 36.♔c2** (**36.♗xa6? bxa6 37.♗c7 ♗xc1 38.♔xc1 ♘xb3+ 39.♔c2 ♘a5∓**, seems bad for my opponent) **36...♘b4+ 37.♔b1 ♘a6** and I think that I can keep the tension in full control.

PLAN C

I think that I should accept the offered pawn by **35...♗xc1 36.♔xc1 ♘xb3+ 37.♔c2 ♘a5**. It is true that I am giving the bishop pair vs my knight pair, but in return I am a pawn-up, so I will be able at least to hold the draw.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 36

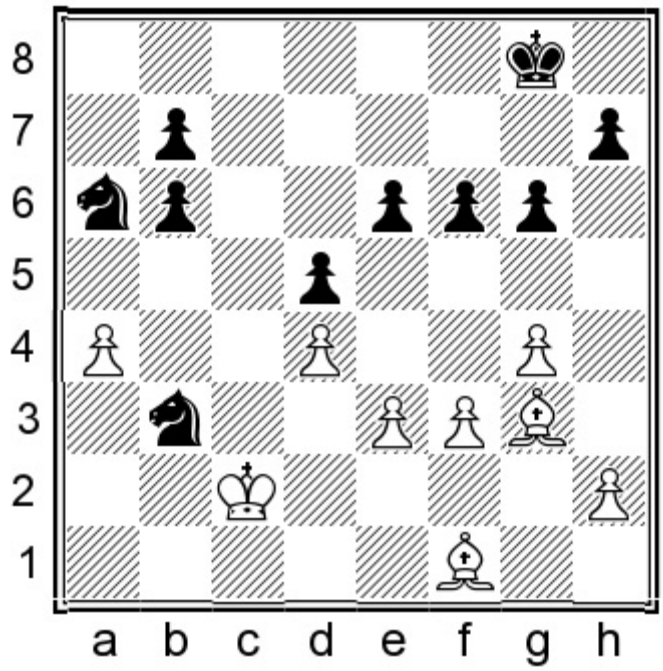
Plan A is giving White the edge after **36.gxf5 gxf5 37.♗b5**.

Plan B is best — the analysis is correct.

Plan C is a bad one — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
10	**50**	**10**

35...♗xc1?! 36.♔xc1 ♘xb3+ 37.♔c2



37...♘a5

The knight pair is stuck on the rim and White just has to open the centre.

38.♔c3 ♔f7 39.e4?!

Too early. 39.♗d6 ♘c6 40.e4, was the way.

39...f5?!

Black had to go for 39...dxe4 40.fxe4 e5! 41.dxe5 (41.d5?! ♘c5) 41...♘c5, or 39...♘c6, restricting the

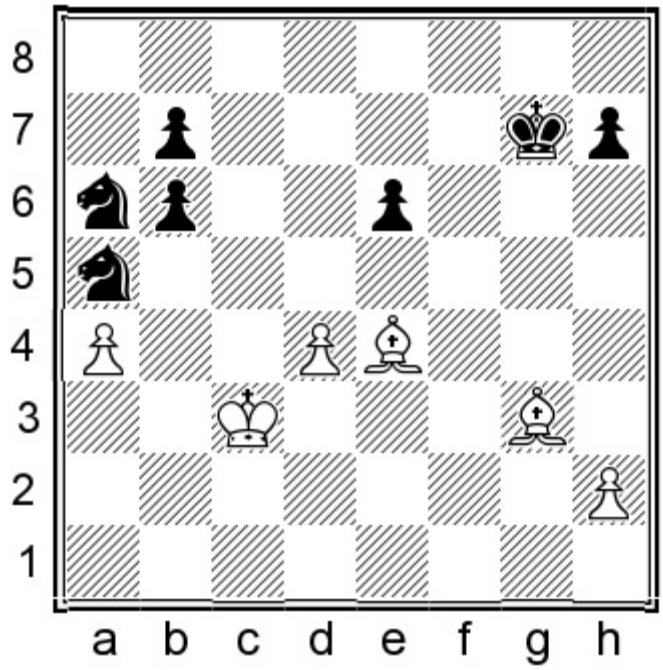
bishops.

40.gxf5 gxf5 41.♗d3 ♔g6

Here the game was adjourned and White had to seal his move. A lot of stories have been written about this position and the long night before the game continues...

42.♗d6?

White missed 42.♗b1! ♘c6 (if Black chose 42...fxe4 the game opens up after 43.fxe4 dxe4 44.♗xe4+ ♔g7

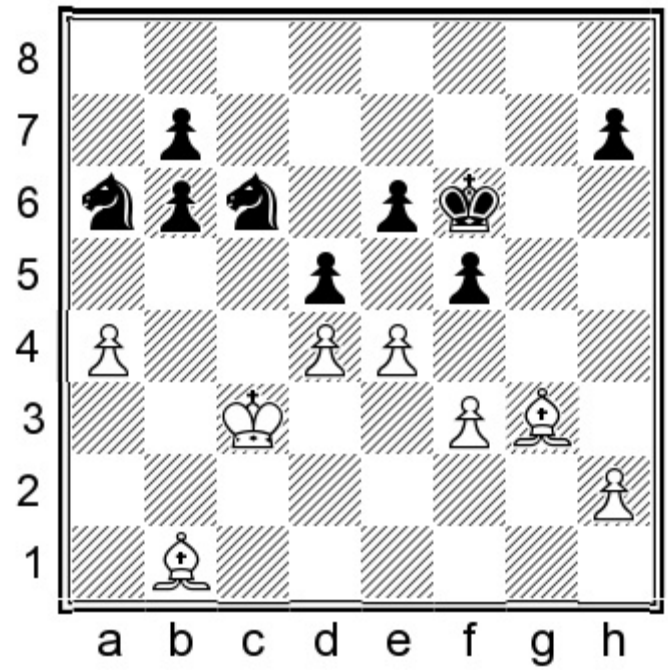


and White's bishops obviously prevail. An interesting variation was found by Salo Flohr: 45.♗xb7! ♘xb7 46.♔c4+–, followed by ♔b5-a6-b6 and the a-pawn eventually queens. The other options are 42...♘c4 43.♗f4, with the idea ♗a2 and 42...dxe4 43.fxe4 ♔g5 44.exf5 exf5 45.♗d6±) 43.exd5 exd5 44.♗a2 ♘e7 (44...♘ab4 45.♗b3+–) 45.♗h4±.

42...♘c6 43.♗b1 ♔f6?

And now Black in his turn missed 43...♘a7! (with the idea ...b5) 44.exd5 exd5 45.♗a2 b5 46.a5 (46.♗xd5 bxa4) 46...b4+! (46...♘c6?! 47.♗xd5 ♘xa5 48.f4±) 47.♔d3 ♘b5 48.♗e5 ♘ac7 49.♔c2 ♔f7 50.♔b3 ♘a6=.

44.♗g3!



After 44.exd5?! exd5 45.♗a2 ♔e6=, or 44.h4?! ♘ab8 45.♗f4 ♘d7 46.♗g5+ ♔g6 47.exd5 exd5 48.♗a2 h6 49.♗f4 ♘e7! (49...♘f6?! 50.♗e5) 50.♗d6 ♘c8!=, White cannot make headway.

44...fxe4

If 44...♘ab4 then 45.♗e5+! (45.♗c7?, would only lead to a draw after 45...dxe4 46.fxe4 fxe4 47.♗xe4 ♘d5+=) and Black's king is pushed to g6: 45...♔g6 (45...♘xe5 46.dxe5+ ♔xe5 47.♔xb4+–), after which White wins by 46.♗d6 ♘a6 47.exd5 exd5 48.♗a2+–. Other Black's tries are 44...♔g6 45.exf5+ exf5 46.♗a2 ♘ab4 47.♗b3 ♔f6 48.♗d6+–, or 44...♔g5 45.exd5 exd5 46.♗a2 ♘cb4 47.♗b3 f4 48.♗e1±, planning ♗d2-c1-a3, or, finally, 44...♘e7 45.♗h4+ ♔f7 46.♗xe7 ♔xe7 47.exd5 exd5 48.♗xf5 h6 49.♗c8+–.

45.fxe4 h6 46.♗f4 h5

Or 46...♔g7 47.exd5 exd5 48.♗a2 ♘ab4 49.♗b3 ♔g6 50.♗d6+–.

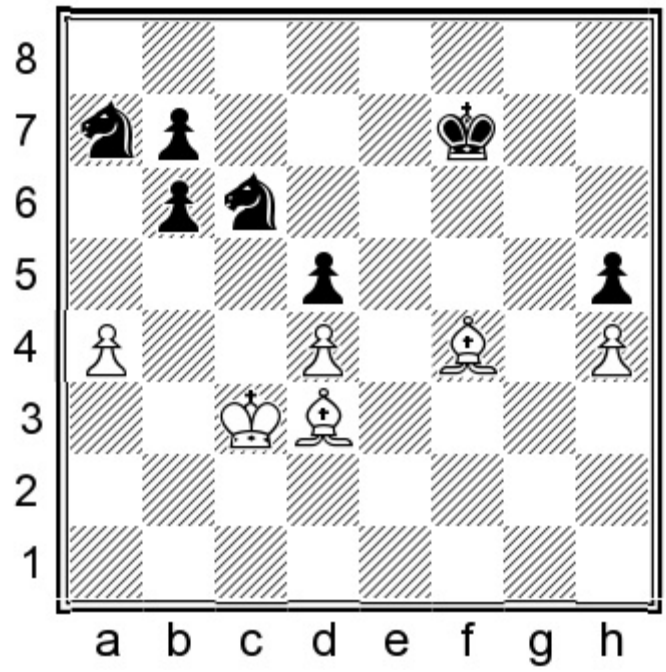
47.exd5 exd5 48.h4 ♘ab8 49.♗g5+ ♔f7 50.♗f5?!

Accurate was 50.♗c2! ♘a7 51.♗d1 ♔g6 52.♗f3+–.

50...♘a7

More resistant was 50...♘e7, but White had a good choice anyway: 51.♗h3! (51.♗xe7 ♔xe7 52.♗g6 ♘c6 53.♗xh5 ♘a7 54.♔b4 ♘c6+ 55.♔b5 ♘xd4+ 56.♔xb6±) 51...♘bc6 52.♗g2 ♔g7! 53.♗xe7 ♘xe7 54.♔b4 ♘c6+ 55.♔b5 ♘xd4+ 56.♔xb6+–.

51.♗f4 ♘bc6 52.♗d3



52...♘c8?!

Black's final mistake. Again he should opt for 52...♘e7! 53.♗c7 ♔e6 54.♗xb6 ♘ac6 55.♗e2 ♘f5 56.♗xh5 ♘xh4 57.♗c5±. But Black would have good chances to save the half point.

53.♗e2 ♔g6 54.♗d3+?!

54.♗f3 ♘8e7 55.♗c7, wins.

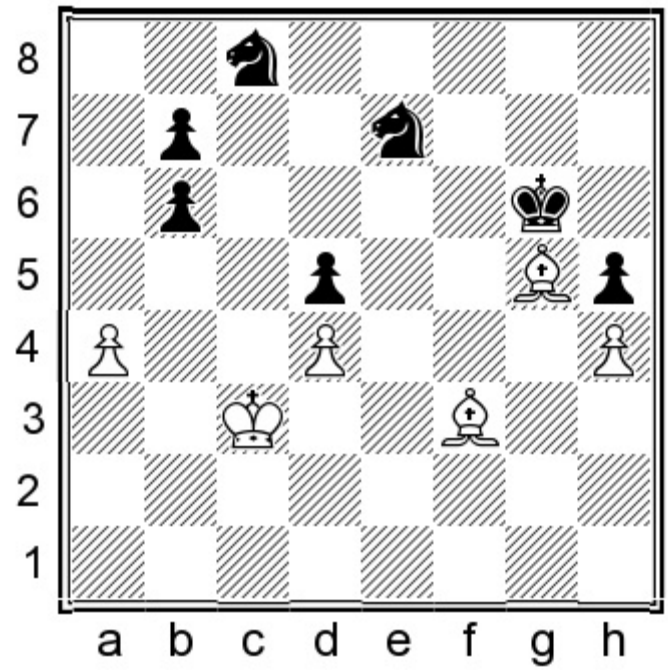
54...♔f6 55.♗e2 ♔g6?!

A better chance was 55...♔f5! 56.♗h2 ♔e4 57.♗g1 ♘d6 58.♗xh5 ♘f5 59.♗g6±.

56.♗f3 ♘6e7

Or 56...♘8e7 57.♗c7 (57.♗g5 ♘f5 58.♗xd5 ♘fxd4 59.♗e4+ ♔f7 60.♗e3±) 57...♘f5 58.♗xd5 ♘fxd4 59.♗xb6+–.

57.♗g5!



And Black resigned due to 57...♘c6 58.♗xd5 ♘d6 59.♗f3 b5 (59...♔f5 60.♗c1! b5 61.♗xc6 bxc6 62.a5+–) 60.♗f4 ♘f5 61.♗xc6 bxc6 62.a5 ♘e7 63.♔b4 ♔f5 (63...♘d5+ 64.♔c5 ♘xf4 65.a6+–) 64.a6 ♘d5+ 65.♔c5 ♔xf4 66.a7 ♘c7 67.♔xc6+–.

1–0

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CHAPTER 3.
MAJOR PIECES ENDINGS

ROOK — STRATEGICAL EXPLOITATION

Naturally, the process of exploitation of possible advantages — or simply the appropriate defence — requires knowledge of fundamental endings.

The methods that must be employed to lead the game to the desired result cannot be described in so many or few words, but they mostly involve activity, planning and good assimilation of rook ending theory, as well as general knowledge of the fundamental positional and tactical motifs.

Rook endings are, in my personal opinion, the most fascinating element of chess. Rich in both tactical and strategical possibilities, they offer us the opportunity to marvel at their endless creative potential and unique ideas.

Of all chess endings (pawn, queen, rook, bishop and knight), rook endings are the ones encountered most frequently. Like all aspects of chess technique, rook endings encompass a significant amount of theoretical knowledge, which we have to be aware of — just like our openings.

In this way we will be able to make correct decisions at important junctures of the game, decisions that will either promise us victory or allow us to secure the draw.

There are five basic principles that must be followed faithfully, in order to be sure that we have fullfield our ‘duty’, so to speak:

SOS Tip 1 — Rook Endings Principles

1. Rook behind the pawn: The placement of the rooks in relation to the pawns is very significant. The rook must be placed behind the pawn, whether the pawn is ours or the opponent’s. With every move the pawn makes, the radius of our rook will increase and that of the opponent’s will decrease.
2. Active rook: In all rook endings, the active handling of the rook is almost always the indicated course of action. The initiative and attacking possibilities must always figure in our plans and moves.
3. Active king: As in all endings, the active king has the first say, as the endgame is its finest hour. Particularly when it can cooperate harmoniously with the rook, it can dynamically help us solve the problems posed by the position.
4. Planning: Our moves must be part of one or more plans. Active plans must be directed towards the sector of the board where we are superior and, correspondingly, defensive plans must be directed towards the area where we are inferior.
5. Combination of all the above: When we are able to combine all of the above-mentioned elements,

then we will be able to extract the maximum from our position!

The famous Author & Coach Mark Dvoretsky makes a general quote: ‘Rook activity is the cornerstone in the evaluation and play of rook endgames.

This activity may take diverse forms: from attacking the enemy pawns, to the support of one’s own passed pawns, to the interdiction or pursuit of the enemy king.

There are indeed times when the rook must remain passive, and implement purely defensive functions. But even then, one must stubbornly seek out any possibility of activating the rook, not even stopping at sacrificing pawns, or making your own king’s position worse.’

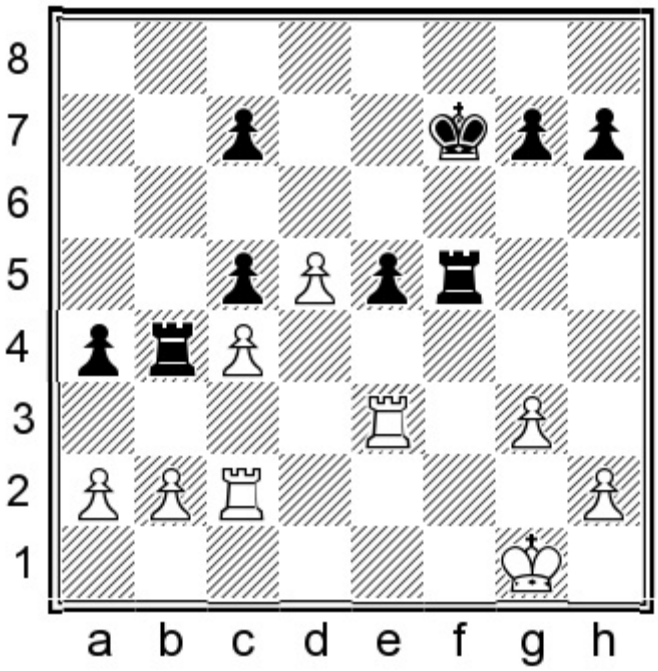
The most important feature in double rook endgame is the harmonious cooperation between the rooks — together they form an incredible force machine power, capable of destroying any defence. Do not allow it or simply try to implement it!

So, once more it must be noted that we should keep our rooks active; if we do not know why, they do! (or probably you will find out too late why we should have...).

Rooks endings always attract as they are rich in possibilities and interesting manoeuvres and plans. Technical rook endings should be a part of a chess players’ education, as they consist of about 40% of all endings played.

EXERCISE 37
Grivas Efstratios
Chernov Vadim
A53 Elista 1998

32...♔f7



EVALUATION

The weaknesses in my opponent's pawn structure (a4, c7, c5, e5) appear (and are) serious. As a result, must have the advantage. However, the problem of converting, or increasing, this advantage remains complicated, as Black seems able to defend, because of the simple reason that these weaknesses are not accessible to my rooks.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

The implementation of a logical but extraordinary idea, to voluntarily relieve Black of an inaccessible weakness (a4) in order to enable my rooks to attack the rest (c7, c5, e5), is in need. After **33.b3 axb3 34.axb3**, my c2-rook will be ready to be activated via the a-file, when the threat of ♖a2-a5, will immediately decide. Black can press my b-pawn (...♖f6-b6) but my rook activity is far more important.

PLAN B

My primary thought should be to activate and centralise my king and probably to exchange a pair of rooks. For this I should opt for **33.♔g2 ♔f6 34.♖f3**, when my idea should be soon implemented, giving me a nice advantage.

PLAN C

The black e-pawn is my direct target, so I should try to move the defending black rook away, without giving it the possibility of an active ...♖f4**.** So, I should prepare a g4 advance in an appropriate moment, starting with **33.♖e4 ♔e7 34.h3**, when I am ready to proceed.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 37

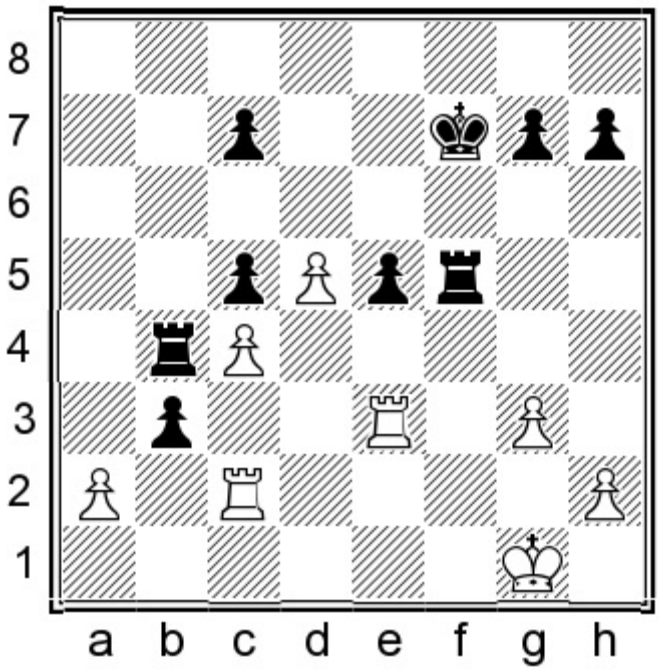
Plan A is best — see the game.

Plan B is a wrong plan. After **34...e4! 35.♖fc3** (**35.♖xf5+? ♔xf5 36.♔f2 ♔e5∓**) **35...♔e5**, Black achieves sufficient counterplay to hold the draw.

Plan C is giving Black a comfortable position after **34...♔d6**.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**0**	**15**

33.b3! axb3?!

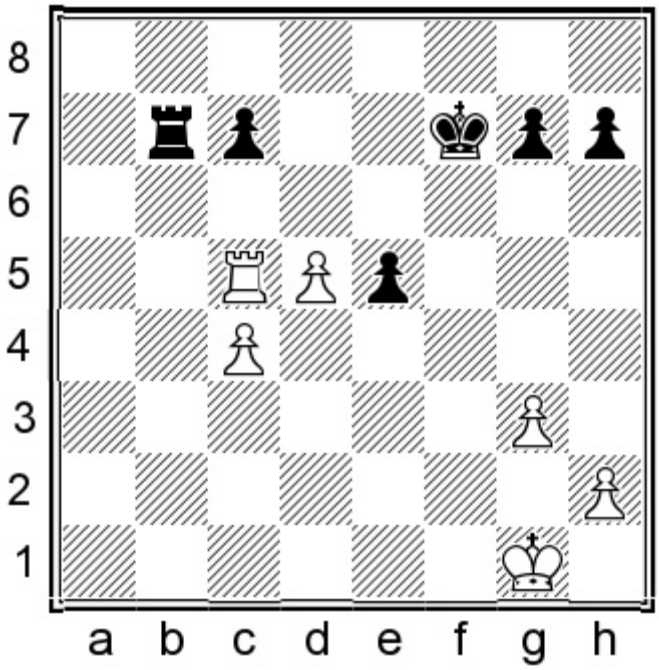


Helping White to penetrate via the a-file. Not satisfying is 33...a3 34.♖f2! ♔f6 35.g4 (or 35.♖xf5+ ♔xf5 36.♖f3+ ♔g6 37.♖f8) 35...♖xf2 36.♔xf2, as the threats ♖f3+ and ♖f8 and ♔e3-e4 will decide, but Black maybe should try 33...♔f6 34.♔g2 (34.bxa4 ♖xa4 35.♖b3 ♔e7∞) 34...h5 35.h3 g5 36.♖d2±.

34.axb3 ♖f6

Forced, as otherwise the rook transfer ♖a2-a5 immediately decides.

35.♖a2 ♖fb6 36.♖a5 ♖xb3 37.♖xb3 ♖xb3 38.♖xc5 ♖b7



White has exchanged two of the four weak black pawns (a4 and c5) but his advantage has increased! Naturally, there is a logical explanation for this phenomenon, and it consists of the increased activity of the white rook and the possibility it has gained of accessing Black's remaining weaknesses, at the same time forcing its black counterpart to passivity.

39.♖c6! ♔e7!

Black 'sacrifices' a pawn, intending to free his rook from the protection of his c-pawn. Had he remained passive instead, then White would have won the black e5-pawn anyway, with ♔f2-e3-e4. From a practical viewpoint, the move in the game is the indicated course of action.

40.♖e6+ ♔d7 41.♖xe5 ♖b2

It seems that Black has enough counterplay to draw the game, as he has cut off the white king on the first rank and will now place his rook behind the white c-pawn. As White's queenside pawns are not 'strong' anymore, he should change them for Black's kingside pawns. But how can be done that?

42.♖f5!

By means of a series of accurate moves White weakens the g6-square, in order to make it accessible to the white rook.

42...♔e7 43.♖h5 h6

43...♖c2 44.♖xh7 ♔f6 45.♖h4+–.

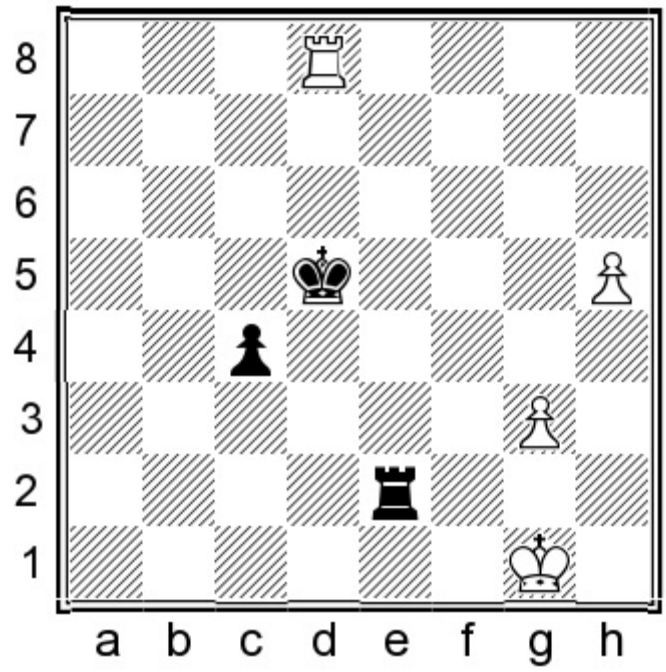
44.♖e5+! ♔d7 45.♖e6 ♖c2 46.♖g6?

Although this was White's idea, he should have prepare it by 46.♖c6 g5 (46...♔d8 47.h4!) 47.h3 h5 48.♖h6.

46...♖xc4 47.♖xg7+ ♔d6 48.♖g6+ ♔xd5 49.♖xh6

White thought that the two connected passed pawns will beat the isolated passed c-pawn. He believed that the white king's participation in the battle is not required (a very rare occurrence), as the white rook is exceptionally active. But this wasn't the case...

49...♖c2 50.h4 c5 51.h5 c4 52.♖h8 ♖e2 53.♖d8+



53...♔e4?

Black blunders. With 53...♔c6, he could draw: 54.♖c8+ ♔d5, as the prepared 55.h6, fails to 55...♖e1+ 56.♔g2 ♖e2+ 57.♔h3 ♖e6!.

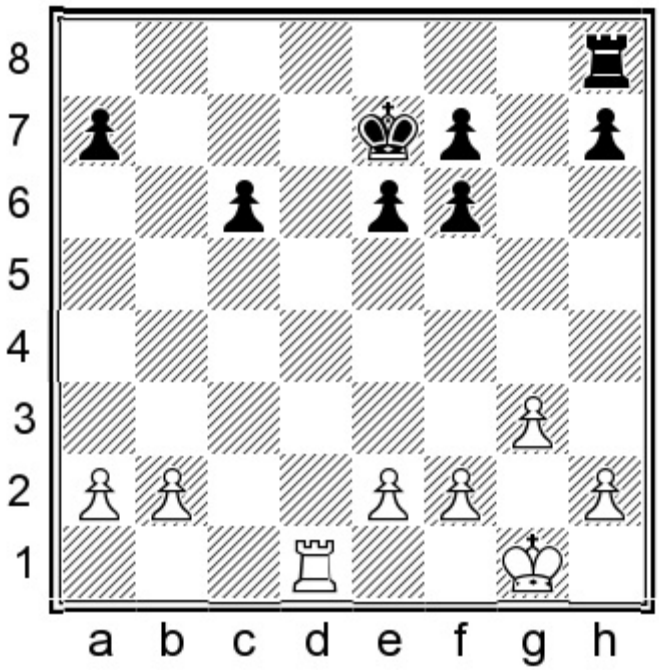
54.h6

And Black was ‘obliged’ to resign...

1–0

EXERCISE 38
Lein Anatoly
Littlewood Paul
E04 Hastings 1981

21...bxc6



EVALUATION

My advantage is obvious and permanent. This is based of course on my opponent's shattered pawn structure (doubled and isolated pawns). All these looks nice but the main question remains: how I will benefit?; what are my plans? Well, I can start with some microplans: applying pressure with my rook on both sides of the board, centralise my king and then try to create a passed pawn — simple, isn't it?

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Obviously Black can defend all his weaknesses by his king or his rook, so there is not much that I can directly do. I feel that my king will be play a star role in the procedures and a good idea should be to advance him on the king side, attacking the isolated black h-pawn. Starting with **22.♔g2 ♖b8 23.♖d2** and then ♔g2-h3-h4-h5-h6, looks like I am on the right track for gaining material advantage.

PLAN B

Activity of the rook is important and this can be applied via the 4th rank. So I should opt for **22.♖d4 ♖b8 23.b3 ♖b5**. This is probably the best square for the black rook, as it can protect both its a- and h-pawns, by advancing them on the 5th rank. But on the other hand these pawns are coming 'nearer' to the white king... After **24.♖a4 a5 25.♔g2**, I can feel confident.

PLAN C

The open d-file is not of great importance in the present situation, as the pressure on the black weaknesses is valuable. I can start applying pressure by **22.♖c1 ♖b8 23.b3 ♔d6** and then advance my rook on the 4th rank and improve my king.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 38

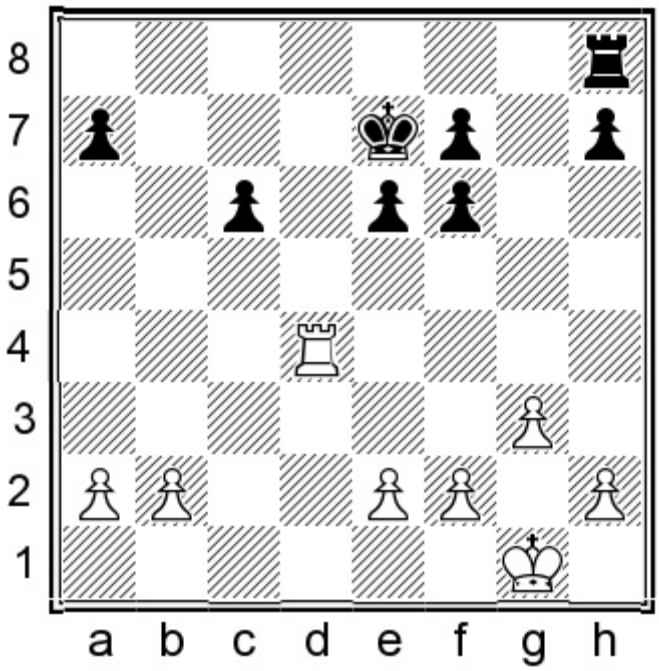
Plan A cannot be implemented, as the black rook will be placed on b5, stopping the white's king march.

Plan B is best — see the game.

Plan C is quite similar to Plan B, but White has to examine the pawn sacrifice by **22...♖d8 23.♖xc6 ♖d2 24.♖c7+ ♔f8 25.♖xa7 ♖xb2**, which gives Black counterplay.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
10	**50**	**35**

22.♖d4!



The start of the first microplan.

22...♖b8 23.b3 ♖b5

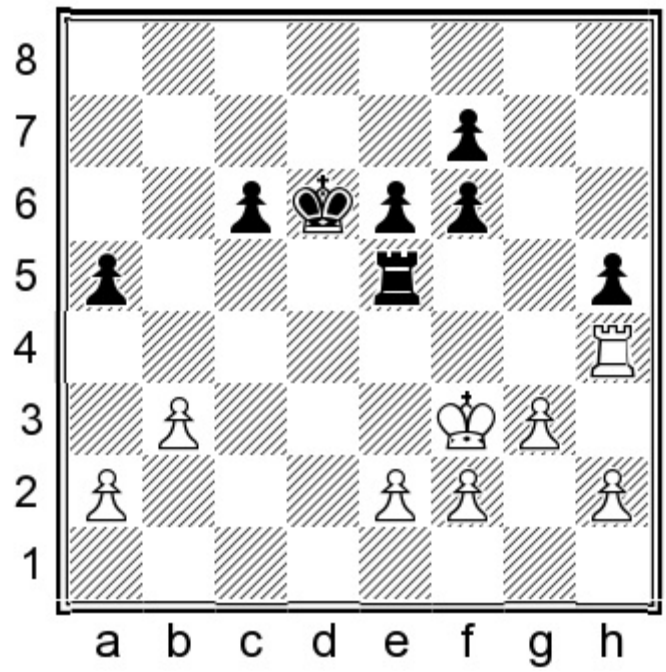
This is probably the best square for the black rook, as it can protect both its a- and h-pawns, by

advancing them on the 5th rank. But on the other hand these pawns are coming ‘nearer’ to the white king...

24.♖a4 a5 25.♔g2

The second microplan begins.

25...♖c5 26.♔f3 ♖e5 27.♖c4 ♔d6 28.♖h4 h5



29.g4!

And here comes the third microplan; the creation of a passed pawn. On the other hand Black is getting rid of a serious weakness... But this is modern chess; a continually exchange of advantages, in order to get access on the more valuable.

29...hxg4+ 30.♖xg4 ♔e7 31.h4 ♖d5 32.e3 f5 33.♖c4 ♖d2

Black is in trouble. Alternatives as 33...♔d6 34.h5 f4 35.♖d4! (35.♖xf4 ♖xh5 36.♖xf7±) 35...♔e5 36.♖xd5+ exd5 37.h6 ♔f6 38.♔xf4+–, or 33...c5 34.♖a4+–, or, finally, 33...♖d6 34.♖c5+–, prove his problems.

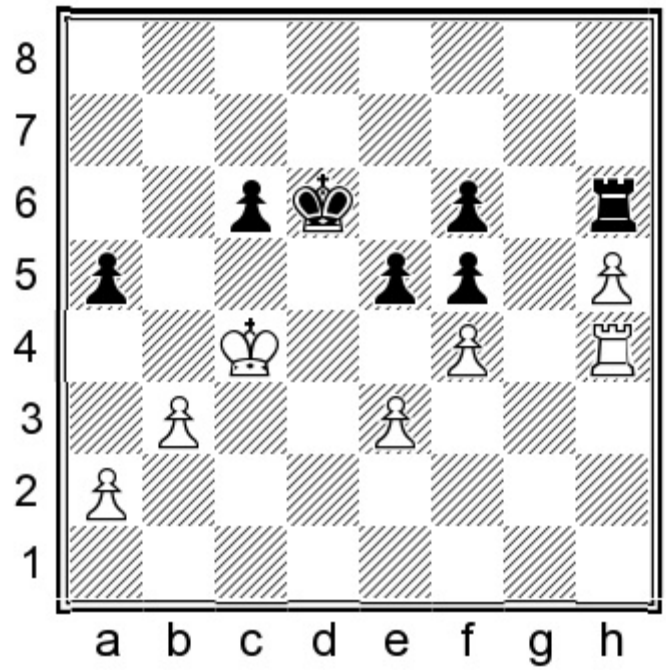
34.♖a4 ♖d5 35.♔e2

White now protects his second rank in order to give more freedom to his rook. Also his king is heading for the queenside.

35...♖b5 36.♖c4 ♔d6 37.♔d3 ♖b8 38.h5! ♖h8 39.♖h4 ♖h6

Now, as Black’s rook is passive, the white king starts his important role — on the queenside!

40.♔c4 e5 41.f4 f6



42.b4!

As Black's weakness on a5 is not any more accessible, White exchanges it and creates a second outside passed pawn!

42...axb4

Or 42...a4 43.♖h3 ♔d7 44.♔c5 ♔c7 45.a3+–.

43.♔xb4 ♔d5 44.a4 c5+ 45.♔c3 ♔e4

Black tries to active, as the passive retreat 45...♔c6, loses to 46.♔c4 ♔b6 47.♔d5 exf4 48.exf4 ♔a5 49.♔xc5 ♔xa4 50.♔d6.

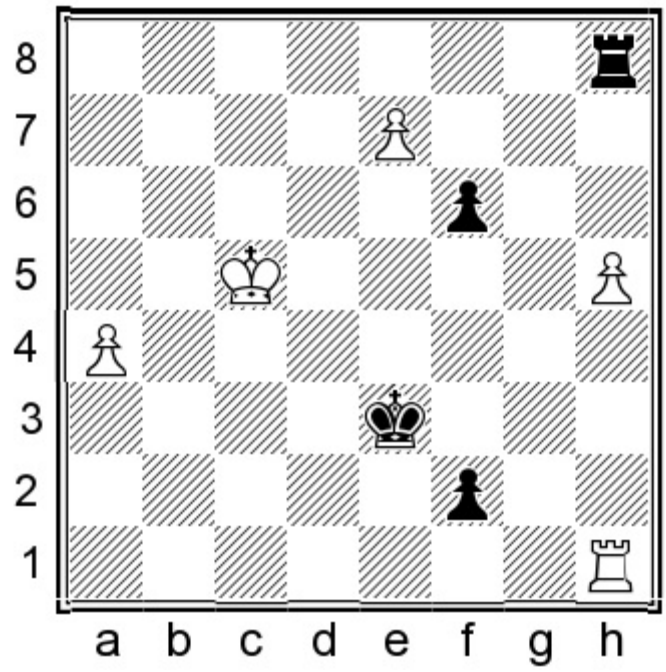
46.fxe5+ ♔xe3

46...♔xe5 47.♔c4 ♔d6 48.a5 ♔c6 49.♖h1+–.

47.e6!

A grave mistake would be 47.exf6? ♖xf6 48.h6 ♖f8 49.h7 ♖h8 50.a5 f4 51.a6 f3 52.a7 f2 53.♖h1 ♔e2=.

47...f4 48.e7 ♖h8 49.♔c4 f3 50.♔xc5 f2 51.♖h1



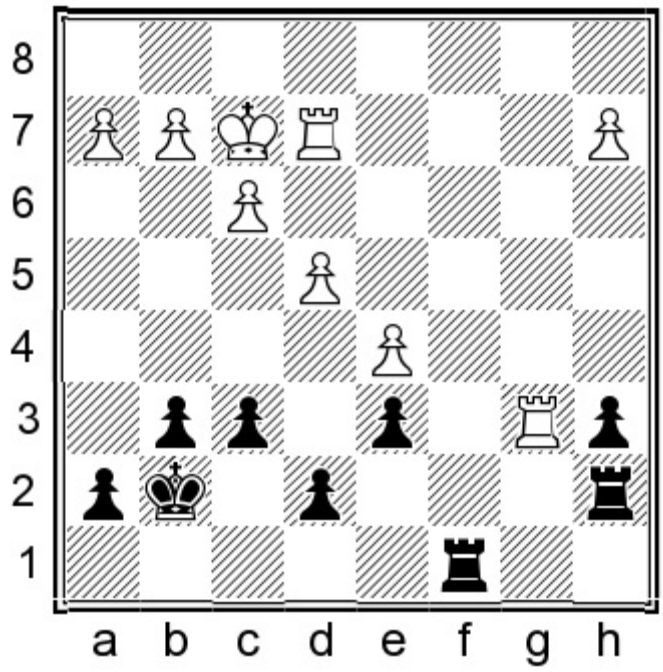
51...♔f3

Black is lost anyway: 51...♖xh5+ 52.♖xh5 f1=♕ 53.e8=♕++–, or 51...♔e2 52.♔d6 f1=♕ 53.♖xf1 ♔xf1 54.♔d7+–.

52.♔d6 ♔g2 53.♖a1 f1=♕ 54.♖xf1 ♔xf1 55.♔d7 f5 56.e8=♕ ♖xe8 57.♔xe8 f4 58.h6 1–0

EXERCISE 39
Meister Peter
Grivas Efstratios
E81 Hungen 2002

26.♔f2



EVALUATION

It looks like my opponent is holding the advantage, as his rooks seem to be better placed and more active, but this is an illusion. White cannot really do anything concrete, in contrast to Black who can use the ...f5 break in an appropriate moment. If White exchange with exf5, then his d-pawn will be rather weak and if he just waits, then I will continue with ...fxe4 and ...♔f6-e5, attacking the e4 weakness. I feel that I can create a good initiative, although it will be difficult to cash the point.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

As the ...f5 break is my primary idea, I feel that I should go directly for it with the natural **26...f5**. Then I will capture on e4 and advance my king in the centre, fulfilling my concept and start pressurising White's centre. I think that my options are more dangerous and my prospects better.

PLAN B

There is nothing to be done at once, so I should think of improving my rooks. I can do that starting with **26...♖c5 27.♖eb2** (**27.g4!?**, might be interesting) **27...f5**, when I should be on the right track for getting the initiative.

PLAN C

My a7-rook is passive and I cannot claim any initiative with such a passive rook, so my primary thought should be to activate it. A good way to do this is to opt for **26...a5**, followed by **...♖ac7**. Then I can exchange a pair of rooks and try for the thematic ...f5 break.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 39

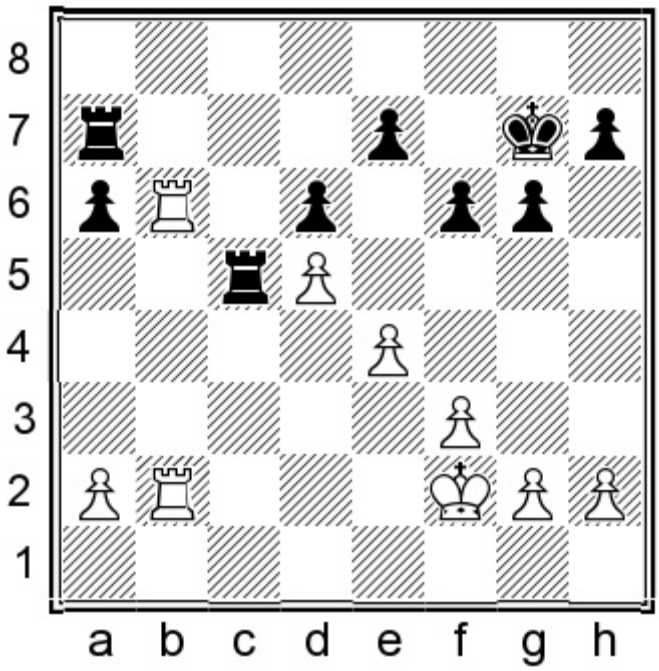
Plan A is not good, as after **27.e5! dxe5 28.♖e6**, White stands fine.

Plan B is best — see the game.

Plan C is not the right one, as White can go for **27.♖b5!**.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
0	**50**	**10**

26...♖c5! 27.♖eb2



An 'obvious' try, but maybe here White should think of 27.g4.

27...f5 28.♖c6

After 28.♖b7? ♖xb7 29.♖xb7 ♖c2+ 30.♔g3 ♔f6, White is facing various problems.

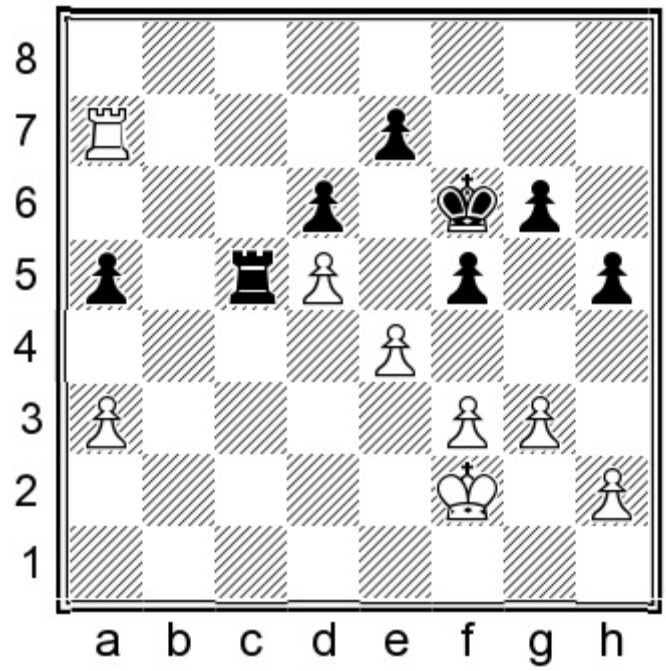
28...♖a5! 29.♖c4 ♖b5!

White was threatening 30.a4!, locking in the a5-rook. Black will now be able to use the 'shy' a7-rook as well.

30.♖bb4

30.♖xb5? axb5 31.♖c2 fxe4 32.fxe4 ♔f6, would bring Black a quick victory, as the white pawns on a2 and e4 will prove very weak and one of them will soon be captured.

30...♖ab7 31.a3 a5 32.♖xb5 ♖xb5 33.♖c7 ♔f6 34.♖a7 ♖c5 35.g3 h5



36.h4?

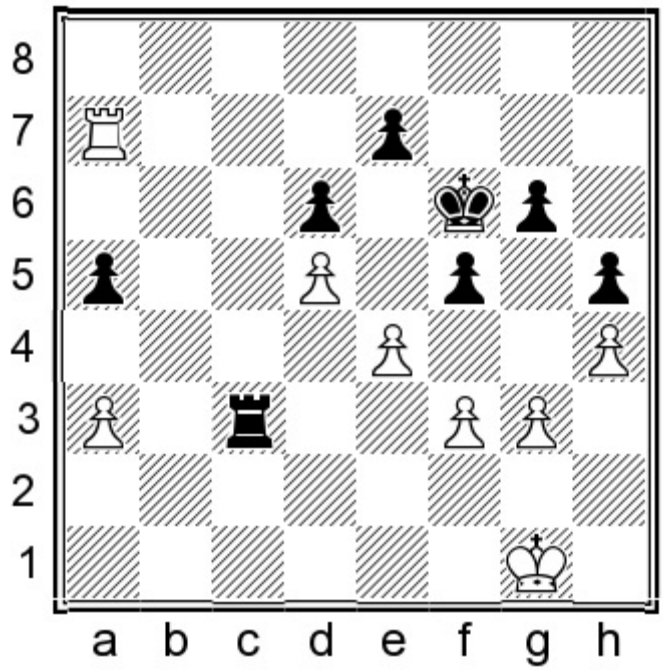
White's position is clearly inferior, but after his last move it becomes easily lost. A better try seem to be 36.♔g2 fxe4 37.fxe4 g5! 38.♔g1 g4 39.♔g2 ♖c4 40.♖xa5 ♖xe4, with an obvious advantage for Black, who however will have to prove it.

36...♖c2+! 37.♔g1

Also not of a help is 37.♔e3 ♖c3+ 38.♔f4 fxe4 39.fxe4 ♖xa3 40.♖a8 a4 41.♖a6 ♔f7 42.♖a7 ♖a1 43.♔g5 a3 44.♖a4 (44.e5 dxe5 45.d6 a2 46.d7 [46.♖xe7+ ♔f8 47.♖a7 ♔e8! 48.♔xg6 e4–+] 46...♖d1 47.♖xa2 ♖xd7–+) 44...a2 45.♔h6 ♔f6 46.♖a5 ♖g1. Of course there are many sub-variations, but this is a typical one.

37...♖c3?

Not accurate. 37...fxe4 38.fxe4 ♖c3!, was curtains.



38.♖xa5?

There is no chance either with 38.♔f2 fxe4 39.fxe4 ♖xa3 and then ...♖a1, ...a4-a3-a2 and ...♔e5. But White could go for 38.exf5! ♔xf5 39.♔f2 ♖xa3 40.♖xe7 ♖d3, where he would have chances to survive.

38...♖xf3

38...fxe4! 39.fxe4 ♖xg3+ 40.♔f2 ♖g4, would also do the job.

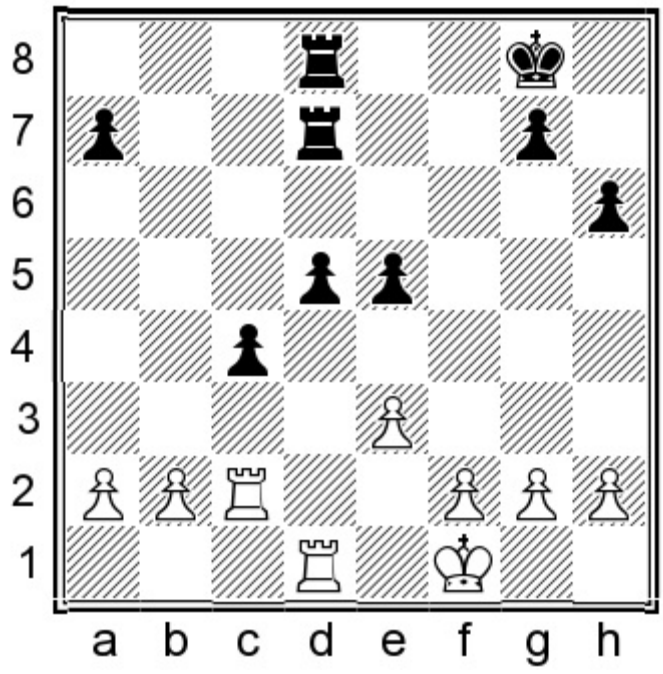
39.exf5 ♖xg3+ 40.♔h2 ♖g4 41.fxg6 ♖xh4+ 42.♔g3 ♖g4+ 43.♔h3 ♔xg6

And Black will win the ending.

0–1

EXERCISE 40
Grivas Efstratios
Daniilidis Aris
D58 Athens 1984

26...fxe5



EVALUATION

It looks like my opponent is not really facing problems in this double-rook endgame. Good pieces and strong centre should allow him to preserve the balance. But maybe things aren't so easy for him, as I didn't accepted this position out of naivety but because I had concrete things and plans in mind, which I think can give me the advantage.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Shuttering Black's pawn structure should be my primary thought here. For this I can opt for **27.e4 dxe4 28.♖xd7 ♖xd7 29.♖xc4**. Then Black will have nothing better than to go for **29...♖d2 30.♖xe4 ♖xb2 31.♖a4 ♖b7**. Then I will advance my king and I will attack his weak e-pawn.

PLAN B

It is obvious that a central break should be in my mind. It is also obvious that in such endgames king activity is important. So, I think I should start with **27.♔e2 ♖b8** and only then **28.e4 d4 29.♖xc4 ♖xb2+ 30.♖d2 ♖xd2+ 31.♔xd2**. In this endgame I should have the better chances, as my rook will go to a5 and then, with the help of the f4 break, I can win material.

PLAN C

I think that by means of **27.b3 cxb3 28.axb3 ♔f7 29.♖a2 ♖b8 30.♖d3 ♖b6 31.♖a5 ♔e6 32.♔e2**, I can exert some pressure on Black's pawns, with ideas like f4 and e4. In case of **32...d4 33.exd4 exd4 (33...♖xd4 34.♖e3) 34.f4 ♔f6 35.♔f3**, I should hold the advantage.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 40

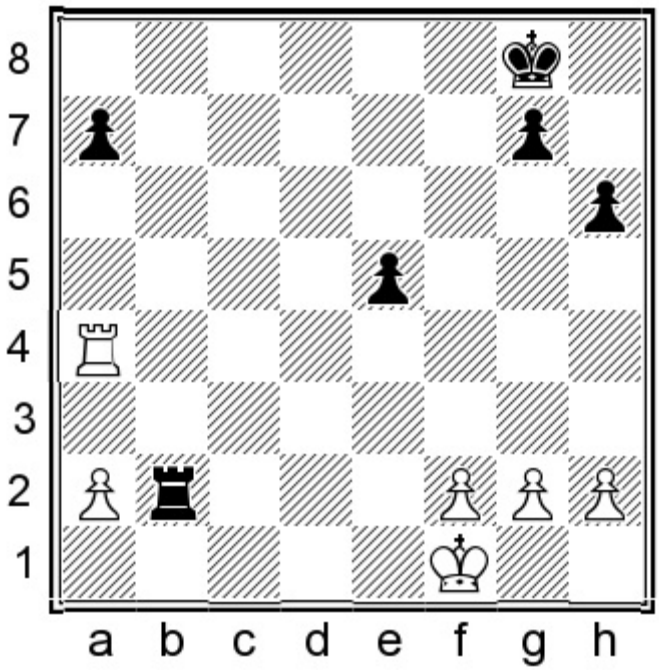
Plan A is best — see the game.

Plan B is not offering much; Black stands fine.

Plan C is not the right one either, as after **32...e4**, Black is fine.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**5**	**5**

27.e4! dxe4 28.♖xd7 ♖xd7 29.♖xc4 ♖d2 30.♖xe4 ♖xb2 31.♖a4



31...♖b7

Black will not be saved in an ending such as after 31...♔f7 32.♖xa7+ ♔f6 33.a4. White will push his a-pawn to a7 and then his king will pick up the black e-pawn (♔e1-d1-c1-b1-b2 and so on). If instead of his weak e-pawn Black had an f-pawn, then this position would be a draw.

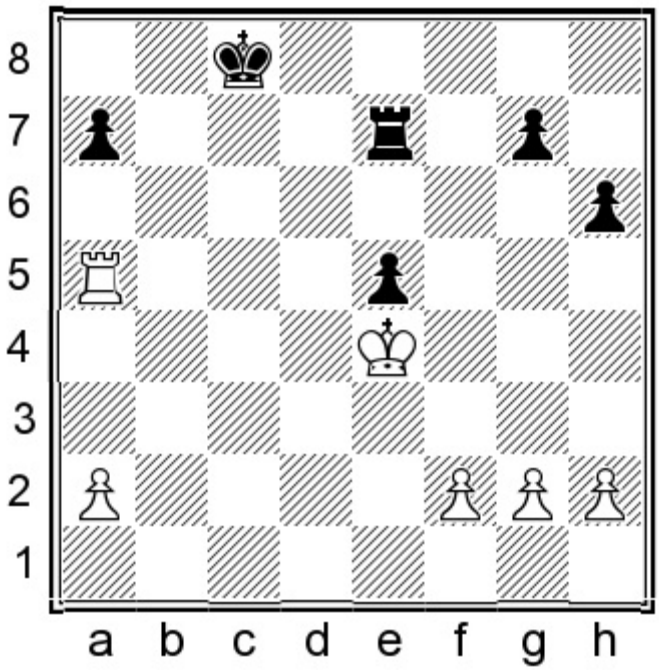
32.♖a5 ♖e7

No big difference is 32...♔f7 33.♖a6! (33.♖xe5? ♖b1+).

33.♔e2 ♔f7 34.♖a6! ♔e8 35.♔e3 ♔d8

Black is unable to hold on his pawn: 35...♔f7 36.♔e4 h5 37.h4 g6 38.g3 ♔g7 39.♖a5 ♔f6 40.f3 ♖b7 41.♖a6+, is also an easy win for White.

36.♔e4 ♔c8 37.♖a5



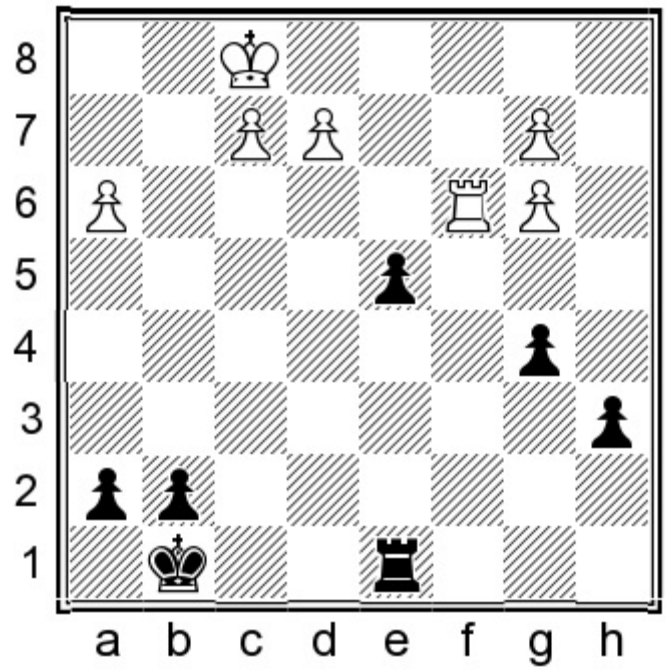
White's position is won. First of all he will capture the black e5-pawn. Then he will proceed in accordance with the standard plans (advance of the white kingside pawns, advance of the a-pawn to a6, etc.). Black is unable to react, though it must be mentioned that he didn't defend in the best possible way in the game, making it easier for White!

37...♔b7 38.♖xe5 ♖c7 39.♔d3 ♖d7+ 40.♔c3 ♔b6 41.f4 ♖c7+ 42.♔b3 ♖d7 43.♖e2 ♖f7 44.g3 ♖f6 45.♔c4 ♔c6 46.♖e7

1–0

EXERCISE 41
Grivas Efstratios
Kotronias Vasilios
E15 Karditsa 1984

46.♔f1



EVALUATION

There was nothing exciting by now in the game, as I have succeeded in preserving a dynamic equality, but now the position has settled off to a dangerous rook ending, as my pawn structure is weaker due to my isolated d-pawn. I need to seek for activity and central control; otherwise I might fall to a difficult position.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Centralising the king is a priority action in nearly all endings. So, I should opt for **46...♔f7 47.♔e1 ♔e6**, when ...h5 and ...g5 can follow, trying to get a passed kingside pawn.

PLAN B

Always thinking of activity, so **46...♖c8!**, is the active continuation. After **47.f4 ♔f7 48.♖d3 ♖c2 49.♖xd4 ♖xb2 50.a4! (50.♖d7+ ♔f8 51.♖a7 ♖b3 52.♖xa6 ♖xg3 53.♔f2 ♖b3 54.e4 h5=) 50...♔e6 51.♔f2 a5 52.axb5 ♖xb5 53.♖d8 a4 54.♖a8 ♖b4 55.♖a7 ♔f6 56.♖a6+ ♔f7 57.e3**, White retains some tiny winning chances due to his better pawn structure and better placed rook, but I can defend.

PLAN C

Passed pawns are an indicated counterplay when facing unpleasant situations. So, I should directly opt for **46...h5**, followed by ...g5, trying to get a passed kingside pawn.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 41

Plan A is fine until **47...♔e6** — see the game.

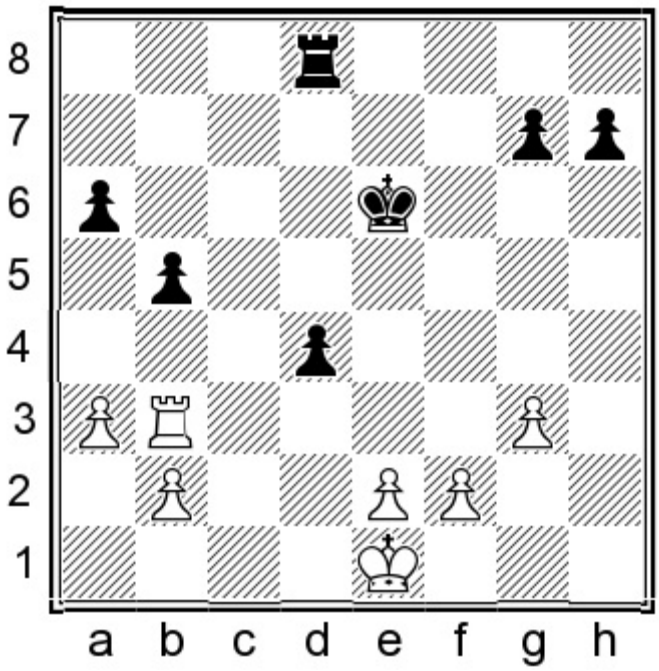
Plan B is best; activity above all!

Plan C is also good; counterplay is welcomed!

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
45	**50**	**45**

46...♔f7 47.♔e1 ♔e6?

Black quickly played the natural (king to the centre) and lost without a real fight. He should instead try 47...h5!, in order to create a passed pawn (...g5 and ...h4) achieving the needed counterplay. I am not sure that White can prove an advantage after that.



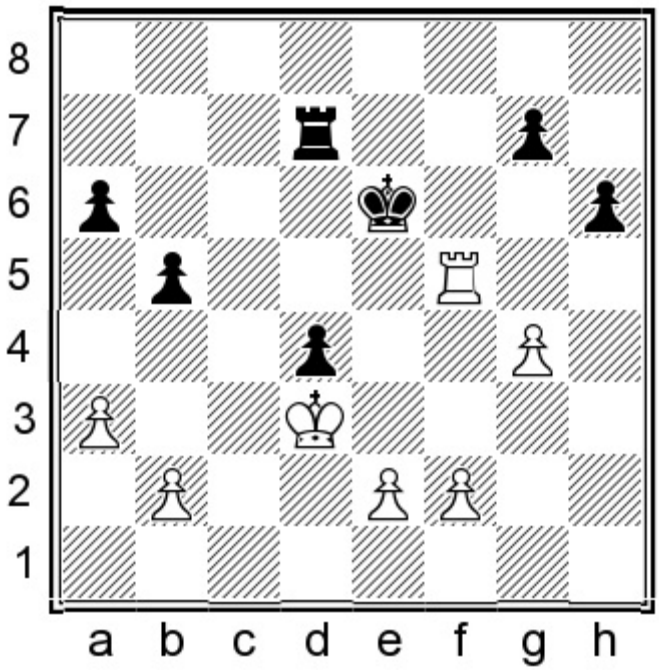
48.g4!

Clearing the third rank for the rook, who can thus apply pressure to the black kingside pawns. Moreover, the text move prevents the future creation of a passed black pawn by ...g5 and ...h5.

48...♔e5 49.♖f3 ♖d7 50.♔d2 h6

Intending ...g6 and ...h5. 50...g6 51.g5!, is only helping White.

51.♖f5+! ♔e6 52.♔d3



52...g5

Forced, as the powerful threat of 53.♖f4, would win the d4-pawn.

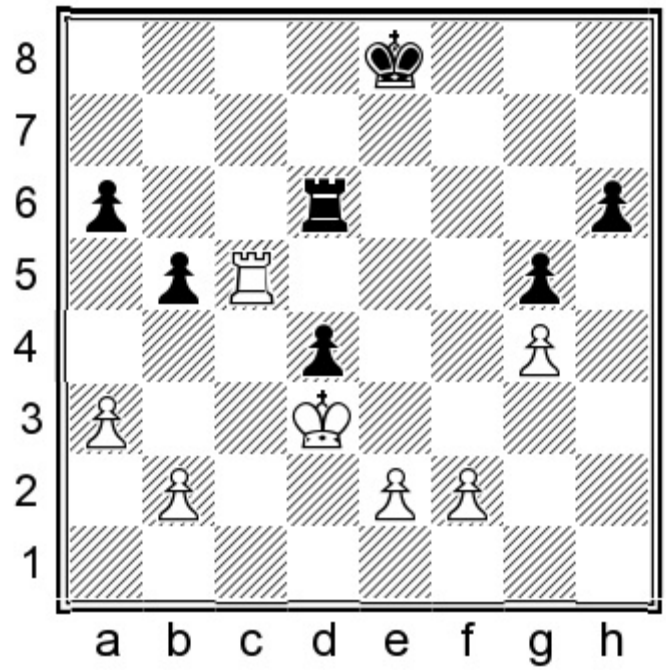
53.♖f8

Now the black weaknesses accessible to the white rook have become three (a6, d4, h6), while Black's pieces are quite passive. Consequently, it is not surprising that Black's position soon collapses.

53...♔e7 54.♖c8 ♖d6 55.♖c7+! ♔e8

Unappetising, but the alternative 55...♔e6 56.♖h7! ♔d5 57.♖e7 and 58.♖e4, is not of a help.

56.♖c5!



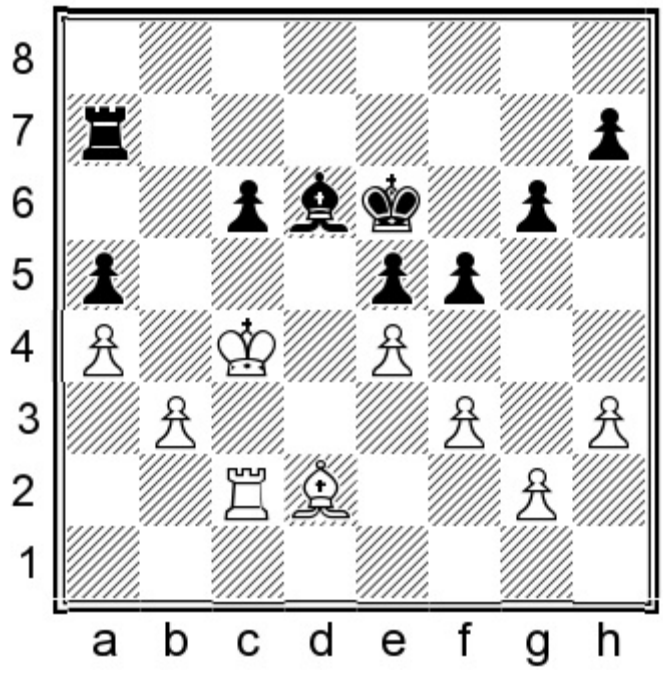
Intending ♖e5(+)-e4, forcing capitulation of the initial target, the isolated black d4-pawn. The rest of the game was one-sided, despite its long duration. White reacted correctly to any ‘traps’ Black set and the end was:

56...♖f6 57.♖e5+ ♔d7 58.f3 ♖c6 59.♖d5+ ♔e6 60.♖xd4 ♖c1 61.a4 ♖c5 62.♖d8 bxa4 63.♖h8 ♖a5 64.♖xh6+ ♔f7 65.♔e4 a3 66.bxa3 ♖xa3 67.♖d6 ♖a2 68.e3 ♖a4+ 69.♖d4 ♖a1 70.♖b4 a5 71.♖b7+ ♔e6 72.♖b6+ ♔d7 73.♖g6 ♖a4+ 74.♔d5 ♖b4 75.♖g7+ ♔e8 76.♖a7 ♖b3 77.♔e4 ♖b4+ 78.♔f5 ♖b5+ 79.♔g6 ♖e5 80.f4 ♖xe3 81.♔xg5 ♖e7 82.♖xa5 ♔f7 83.f5 ♖b7 84.♖a6 ♔g7 85.♖g6+ ♔f7 86.♖c6 ♔g7 87.♖c4 ♖a7 88.♔f4 ♔h6 89.♖c6+ ♔g7 90.g5 ♖a4+ 91.♔e5 ♖a5+ 92.♔e6 ♖a7 93.♖d6 ♖a1 94.♖d7+ ♔g8 95.f6 ♖f1 96.g6 ♖e1+ 97.♔d6 ♖d1+ 98.♔c6 ♖c1+ 99.♔b5 ♖b1+ 100.♔c4 ♖c1+ 101.♔b3 ♖b1+ 102.♔c2 ♖b8 103.♖g7+ ♔f8 104.♖h7

1–0

EXERCISE 42
Grivas Efstratios
Mastrokoukos Georgios
E90 Athens 2001

31...♖a7



EVALUATION

My superiority seems unquestionable: I have the better pawn structure, as the black pawns on a5 and c6 are isolated and thus weak; my bishop is clearly stronger than its black counterpart, as it has ready-made targets (a5, e5) and my king is also better placed. Still, the problem of converting the positional advantage to material gain remains. Which plan should (and can) be followed?

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I think that I should try to create additional weaknesses in Black's camp. As all my advantages are laying on the queenside and the centre, good seems to try to get something on the kingside as well. Opting for **32.exf5+ gxf5 33.g4**, seems excellent, as Black will remain with kingside structural weaknesses as well, adding 'power' to my advantage.

PLAN B

Adding pressure in the centre cannot be a bad policy! After **32.♗c3 ♖a8 33.♖e2**,

I am threatening **34.exf5+ gxf5 35.♗xe5! ♗xe5 36.f4**, with a clear plus. Black would be in trouble trying to find decent answers.

PLAN C

Although it seems strange at first sight, I think that I should exchange the bishops and the black a-pawn with my b, thus relinquishing two of my opponent's main disadvantages! But what will I gain in exchange for this concession? After the afore-mentioned exchanges a rook ending will arise, where my outside passed a-pawn, with my rook properly placed (behind the pawn) and the king ready to invade the enemy camp, will soon bring victory. So, I will go for **32.♖a2 ♔d7 33.♗c3 ♔e6 34.b4**.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		

A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 42

Plan A is not bad, but neither adds anything concrete.

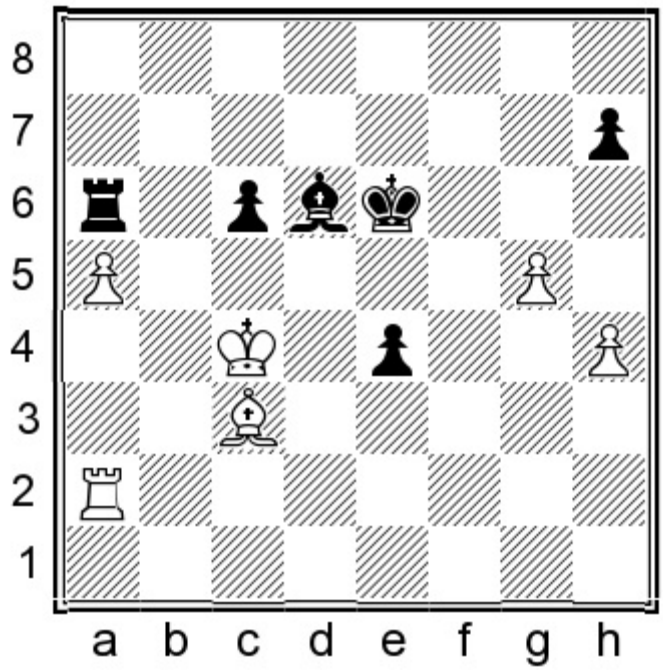
Plan B is hardly dangerous, as Black can go for **33...f4!**.

Plan C is best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
35	**10**	**50**

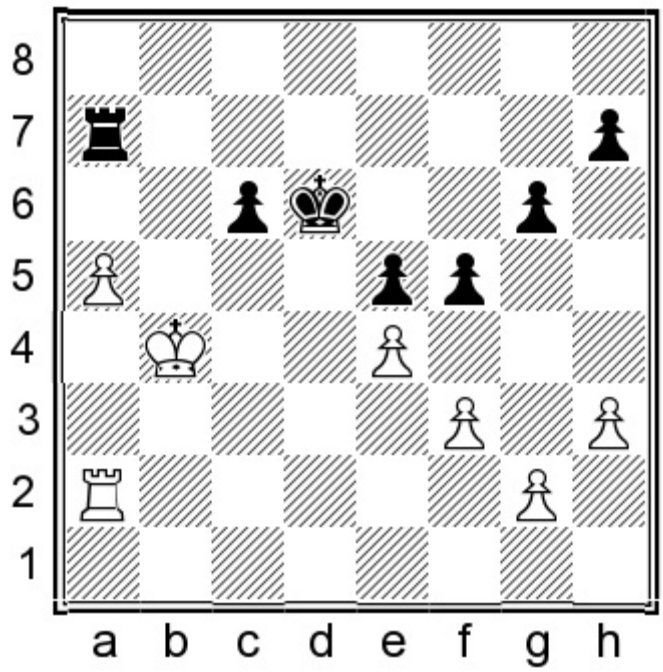
32.♖a2! ♔d7 33.♗c3 ♔e6 34.b4! axb4 35.♗xb4 ♗xb4?!

Black should keep the bishops on the board, making White's task more difficult. A possible continuation could be 35...♗c7. Then White must play really carefully in order to win: 36.a5 ♖a6 37.exf5+! (the attractive 37.g4? fxe4! [37...f4? 38.h4 h6 39.h5 gxh5 {39...g5 40.♗f8} 40.gxh5 ♗d8 {40...♗d6 41.♖g2 ♗xb4 42.♖g6+ ♔d7 43.♔xb4+–} 41.♖d2! ♗e7 42.♗xe7 ♔xe7 43.♔b4 ♔e6 44.♖g2+–] 38.fxe4 g5! [38...♗d8? 39.♖d2 ♗c7 40.g5 ♖a7 41.♖a2 ♖a6 42.♖f2 ♗d8 43.h4 ♖a7 44.♖f8+–] 39.♗c3 h6 40.♖h2 ♗d8 [40...♖a7 41.h4 ♗xa5? 42.hxg5 hxg5 43.♖h6+] 41.♖d2 ♗c7, leads to nowhere!) 37...gxf5 38.g4 ♔f6 39.♗c3 ♔e6 40.h4 ♗d6 (or 40...fxg4 41.fxg4 e4 42.♖e2 ♔f7 43.♖f2+! ♔e8 44.♖f5±) 41.g5 e4 42.fxe4 fxe4



43.h5 ♗e5 44.♗xe5 ♔xe5 45.g6! hxg6 46.h6!!+–, but it was more easy for White to go astray in some sub-variation!

36.♔xb4 ♔d6 37.a5!



37...♖a6

Forced, as after 37...f4 38.a6 g5 39.♖a1 h6 40.♔c4 h5 41.♖a3 ♔d7 42.♔c5 ♔c7 43.♖a4 h4 44.♖a3 ♖a8 45.a7 ♔b7 46.♔d6, the win is be simple. We now have a typical rook ending, where the outside passed pawn is worth its weight in gold.

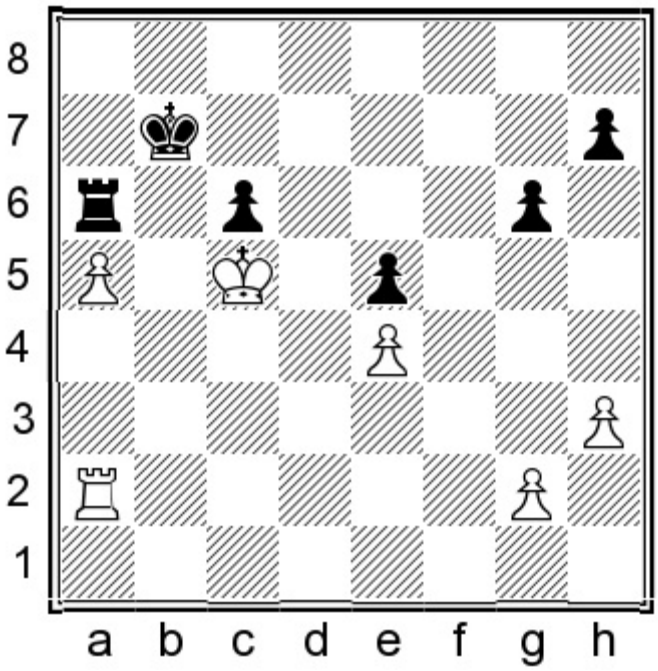
38.♔c4?

Irresponsible! 38.exf5 gxf5 39.g4±, is the correct continuation.

38...fxe4?

And as many times before and many more in the future, Black returns the favour. After 38...f4 39.h4 h6 40.♔b4 ♔e7 41.♔a4 ♔d6 42.♖d2+ ♔c7 43.♖d1 ♖a8, White has no way to win!

39.fxe4 ♔c7 40.♔c5 ♔b7?!



More stubborn is 40...♔d7 41.h4! ♔e6 (41...h5 42.♖a3! ♔c7 43.♔b4 ♔d6 44.♖g3 ♔e7 45.♔a4 ♔f6 46.♖b3+–) 42.g4 ♔d7 43.g5 ♔e6 44.♔b4 ♔d6 45.♖f2 ♔e7 46.♖f6. The result wouldn't change but White would have to work harder!

41.♔d6 ♖a8 42.♔xe5 1–0

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ROOK — MATERIAL EXPLOITATION

In the words of the great FIDE-World Champion Jose Raul Capablanca, the endgame is revealed: 'Whereas the endings can be studied and mastered by themselves, the middlegame and the opening must be studied in relation to the endgame'.

Another well-known axiom is that all rook endings are drawn. But not all rook endings, however, lead inevitably to a draw!

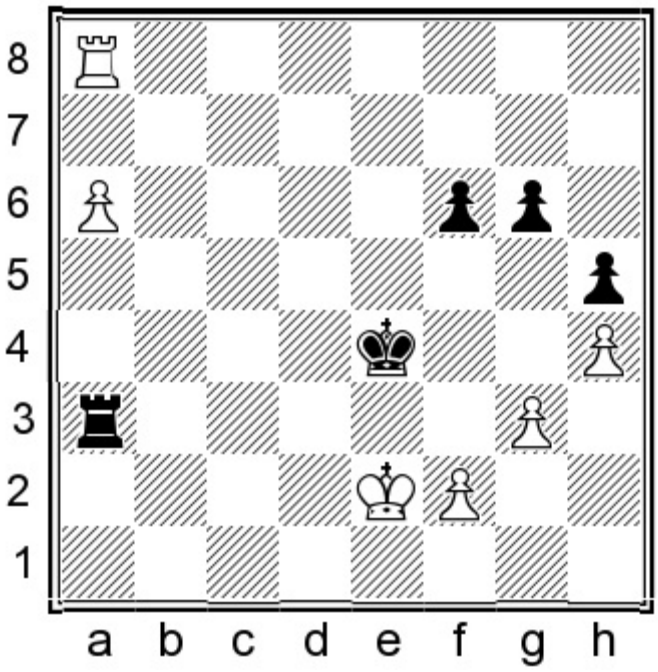
Rooks are aggressive pieces and become despondent if relegated to passive defence. Keep this characteristic in mind, especially if you're defending an inferior position.

SOS Tip 1 — Advices

1. Trade rooks: Well, usually this is the best case, as the pawn endings should be won with an extra pawn. The problem is that the defender will not easily agree to it!
2. Active pieces: This applies to the tips given in the previous chapter.
3. Passed pawn: A passed pawn ties down the defending rook and makes its life harder.
4. Rule of the two weaknesses: An extra pawn is always welcomed, but more targets must be discovered and attacked.
5. Trading: Trade down to reach the 'Lucena Position' (winning one) but not the 'Philidor Position' (draw!).
6. Pawns on both wings: Avoid remaining with pawns only in one wing, unless you are sure that you have a winning case.
7. Blockade: A well-known method that can help the defender.
8. Fight: Fight till the bitter end — you have nothing to lose but a lost position!

EXERCISE 43
Unzicker Wolfgang
Lundin Erik
C01 Amsterdam 1954

47...♔e4



EVALUATION

My opponent has ‘spoiled’ his pawn structure, without getting any activity in return. So, he has turned a theoretical drawn position into a lost one in a few moves. When Black’s pawn stands on f7, his king can return to f6 or g7 with an absolutely drawn position, but now...

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

There is not much about to think here; I have to push my passed pawn to a7, but not by **48.a7? ♖a2+ 49.♔d1 ♔f3**, with a draw,

but with **48.f3+ ♔f5 49.a7**. The win would be easy after **49...♖a2+ 50.♔d3 ♖a1 51.g4+ hxg4 52.fxg4+ ♔xg4 53.h5**.

PLAN B

This is a well-known position, so I will opt for **48.f3+ ♔f5 49.a7**, when Black is now restricted to rook moves only. The position is instructive, as I can win by transferring my king to h6. Then, with the help of my rook, I will be able to capture the black pawns.

PLAN C

I feel that I should never advance my pawn on a7, unless supported by my king. As I can’t go to the queenside with my king without allowing ...♔f3, I should exchange my a-pawn for Black’s g, by **48.♖g8 ♖xa6 49.♖xg6**, maintaining good winning chances.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 43

Plan A is not bad until a certain point but **51.g4?**, turns the game into a draw — see analysis.

Plan B is best — see the game.

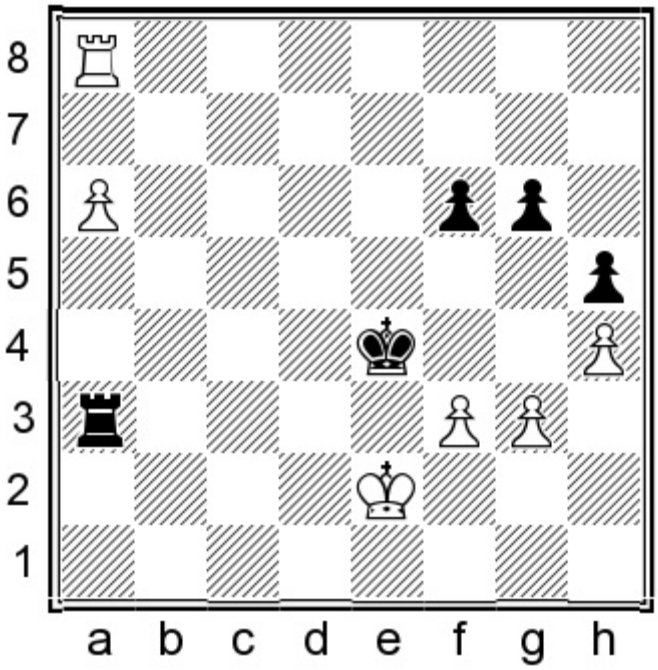
Plan C is out of the question; Black can even play **48...♔f5!**.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
20	**50**	**0**

48.f3+!

The direct 48.a7?, would be a grave mistake: 48...♖a2+ 49.♔d1 ♔f3=.

48.f3+!



48...♔f5 49.a7! ♖a2+

49...♖a6 50.♔d3 ♖d6+ 51.♔c4 ♖d7 52.♔c5 ♖e7 53.♔d6 ♖e6+ (53...♖b7 54.♖b8! ♖xa7 55.♖b5#) 54.♔d7 ♖a6 55.♔e7, doesn't makes any difference.

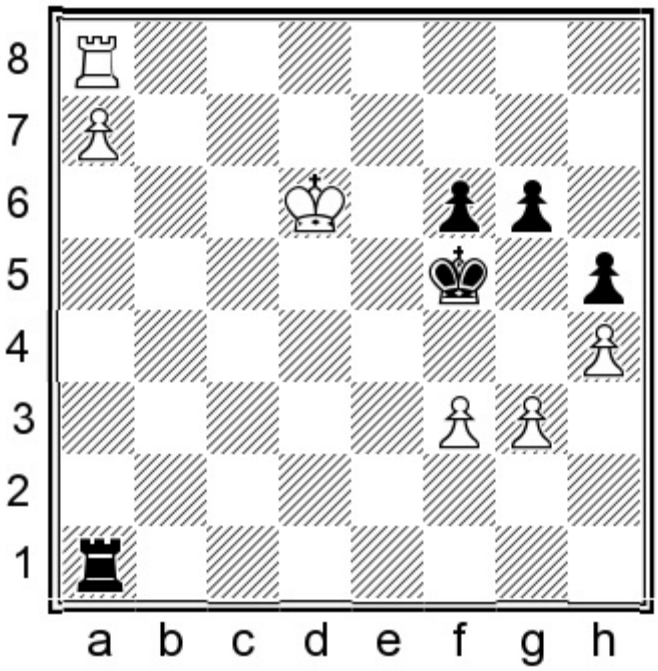
50.♔d3 ♖a1 51.♔d4

51.g4+?, would give Black the chance to survive after 51...♔f4!=, but not with 51...hxg4? 52.fxg4+ ♔xg4 53.h5!+–.

51...♖a5 52.♔c4 ♖a3 53.♔c5 ♖a1

In case of 53...♖xf3, the simplest solution is 54.♖f8 ♖a3 55.a8=♕ ♖xa8 56.♖xa8 ♔g4 57.♖a3 g5 58.hxg5 fxg5 59.♔d4 h4 60.gxh4 gxh4 61.♔e3 ♔g3 62.♖a8+–.

54.♔d6



54...♖a3?

Nor would 54...♖a6+ 55.♔e7 ♖a5 56.♔f8! ♖a6 57.♔f7! (57.♔g7?! g5 58.hxg5 ♔xg5 59.♔f7 ♔f5 60.g4+? [60.♔e7!+–] 60...hxg4 61.fxg4+ ♔f4), prevent White's plan, but it had to be preferred.

55.♔e7?

55.♖c8! ♖a6+ 56.♖c6 ♖xa7 57.♖c5#, provides a spectacular finish.

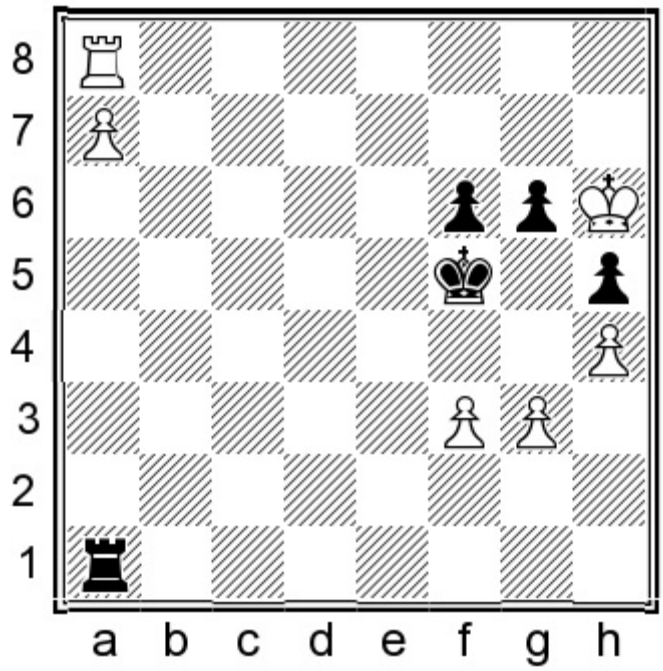
55...♖a6

55...♖a2, is the 'toughest' defence: 56.♔f8! (56.♔f7?! ♖a6 57.♔g7 g5 58.hxg5 ♔xg5 59.♔f7 ♔f5 60.g4+? [60.♔e7!+–] 60...hxg4 61.fxg4+ ♔f4=, with an important circumstance: the f6-pawn is protected by the rook. The squares a6 and f7 are corresponding) 56...♖a6 57.♔f7 ♖a3 58.♔g7+–.

56.♔f7 ♖a3 57.♔g7 ♖a1

With the black rook not standing on a6, 57...g5, here doesn't help: 58.hxg5 ♔xg5 59.♔f7 ♔f5 60.g4+! hxg4 61.fxg4+ ♔f4 62.♔xf6+–.

58.♔h6!



White's plan has been completed and the black pawns are doomed. The rest of the game was rather easy...

58...♖a6 59.♖b8 ♖xa7 60.♖b5+ ♔e6 61.♔xg6 ♖a8

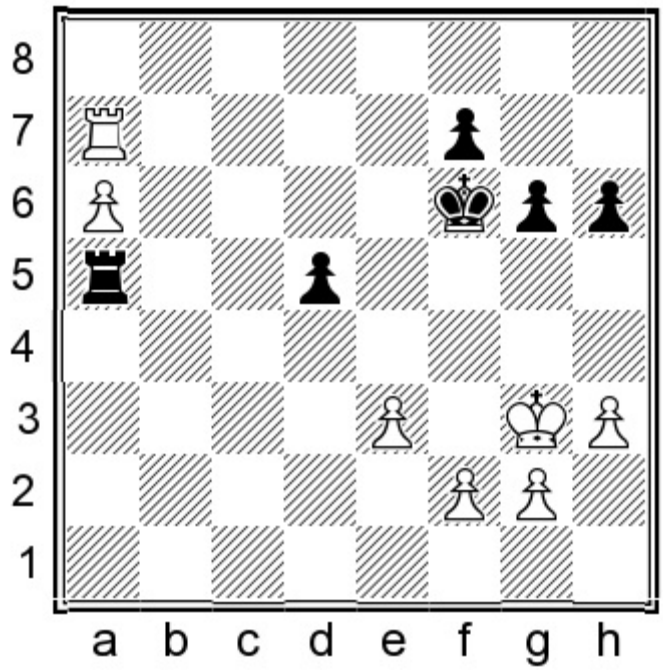
61...♖a3 62.♖f5+–.

62.♔xh5 ♖g8 63.g4 ♖h8+ 64.♔g6

1–0

EXERCISE 44
Carlsen Magnus
Anand Viswanathan
D37 Shamkir 2019

37...♔f6



EVALUATION

A theoretical won position. If the white e-pawn and the black d-pawn were off the board, we would have a drawn position. But here the weak and isolated black d-pawn makes the difference.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Before I push my pawn to a7, I will have to fix my kingside pawn structure, so I will go for **38.♔f3 ♖a2 39.h4 h5 40.♖a8 ♖a3 41.g3**, when I am ready to march to the queenside with my king.

PLAN B

Pushing too early the pawn on a7 might create drawn positions. So I will have firstly to activate my king by **38.f4 ♖a3 39.♔f2 ♖a2+ 40.♔f3 ♖a3 41.♔e2 ♖a2+ 42.♔d3 ♖xg2 43.♔d4 ♖a2 44.♔xd5**. Here the pawn structure is to my benefit and the win in sight.

PLAN C

There is nothing to wait for, here. I should quickly move my pawn to a7 by **38.♖a8 ♖a3 (38...d4 39.exd4 ♖d5 40.a7+–) 39.♔h2 h5 40.a7**, and then go with my king after the weak d-pawn. This will give me an easy win.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 44

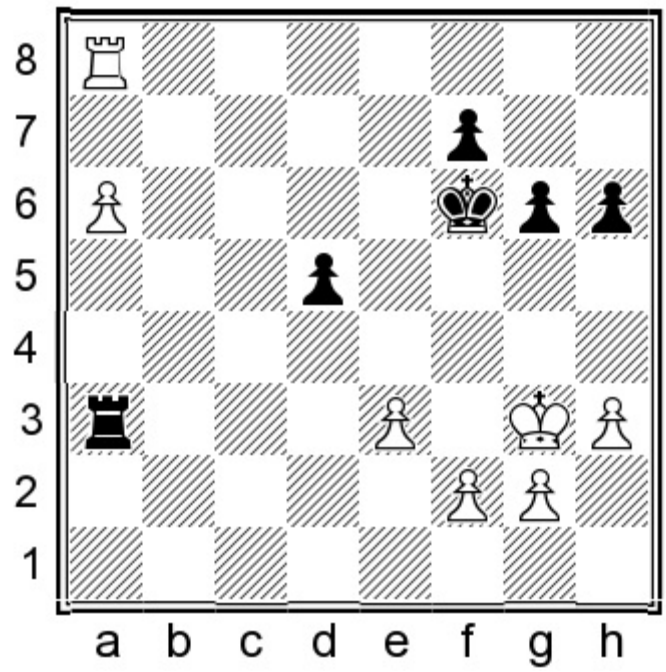
Plan A makes no sense. After **41...d4!**, Black is fine!

Plan B is simply creating another drawn position!

Plan C is best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
0	**0**	**50**

38.♖a8 ♖a3



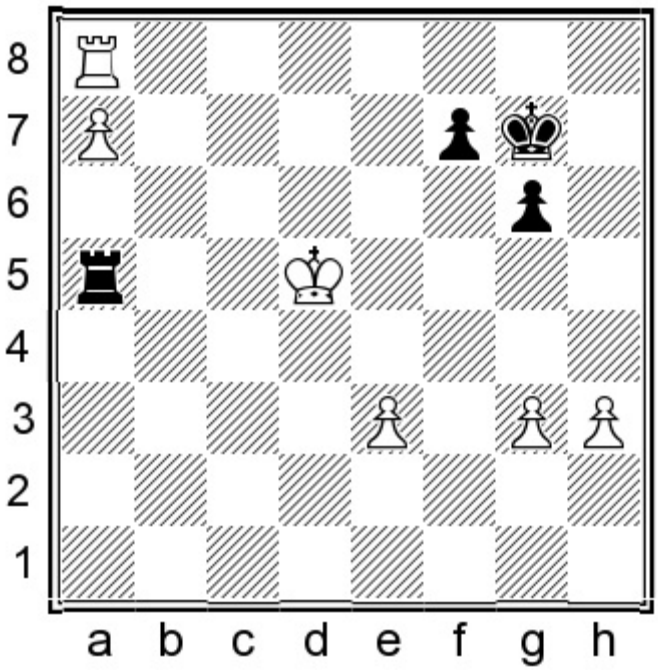
38...d4 39.exd4 ♖d5 40.a7+–.

39.♔h2 h5 40.a7!

One has to be absolutely sure about making this move, as White can never bring the king to a7 now. But M.Carlsen knows that with this structure (pawn on d5), this is just winning.

40...♖a2

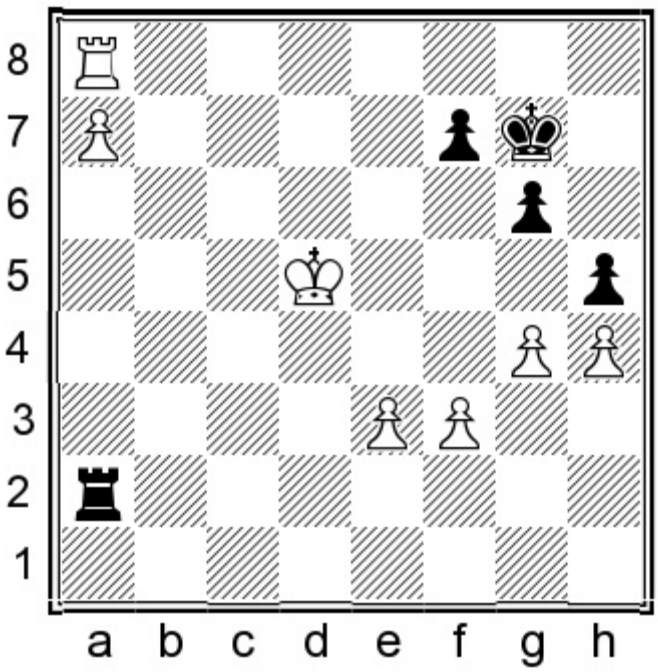
The alternative was 40...h4 41.g4 hxg3+ 42.fxg3! (42.♔xg3? d4=) 42...♔g7 43.♔g2, when White will slowly bring his king and capture d5, while Black can never play ...♔e4 because of ♖e8+: 43...♔f6 44.♔f2 (Black's moves do not matter, as he is just stuck) 44...♔g7 45.♔e2 ♔f6 46.♔d2 ♔g7 47.♔c2 ♔f6 48.♔b2 ♖a4 49.♔c3 ♖a1 50.♔b4 ♖a2 51.♔c5 (White now wins the pawn, as there is no 51...♖a5+, due to 52.♔b6) 51...♔g7 52.♔xd5 ♖a5+



And now a sample win goes as 53.♔e4 ♖a4+ 54.♔f3 ♖a3 55.h4 ♔h7 56.g4 ♔g7 57.h5 gxh5 58.gxh5 ♔h7 59.h6! ♖a4 60.e4 ♖a3+ 61.♔g4 ♖a5 62.e5 ♖a1 63.♔f5 ♖a6 (and now White must lose a tempo!) 64.♔g5! ♖g6+ 65.♔f4 ♖a6 66.♔f5+–. It looks like a long win but in reality it is a quick and forced one!

41.h4 ♔f5 42.f3 ♖a1 43.g3

It might be a bit surprising to some why Black just resigned here, but basically he cannot do anything, while White will bring his king in the centre and will capture the d5-pawn eventually — then push the kingside pawns: 43...♖a2+ 44.♔g1 ♔f6 45.♔f1 ♔f5 46.♔e1 ♔f6 47.♔d1 ♔f5 48.♔c1 ♔f6 49.♔b1 ♖a5 50.♔b2 ♖a4 51.♔b3 ♖a1 52.♔b4 ♖a2 53.♔c5 ♖a3 54.♔xd5 ♖a2 55.g4 ♔g7 (55...hxg4 56.fxg4, is a position examined above)



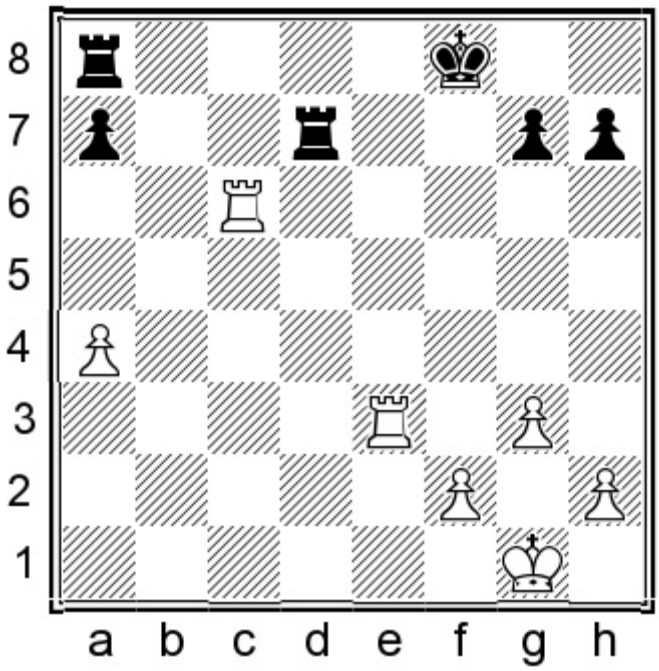
56.g5 ♔h7 57.e4 ♔g7 58.f4 ♔h7 59.f5 gxf5 (59...♔g7 60.f6+ ♔h7 61.♔d6 ♖d2+ 62.♔e7 ♖d7+

63.♔f8+–) 60.exf5 ♔g7 61.f6+ ♔h7 62.g6++–.

1–0

EXERCISE 45
Rubinstein Akiba
Spielmann Rudolf
A57 Vienna 1922

28...♖d7



EVALUATION

I have a won position. Apart from my extra pawn, my rooks are active and my king can assist the advance of my kingside pawns. I should mainly seek to create more weaknesses in Black's camp and I must of course avoid the exchange of the a-pawns, something that will create a drawn position.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Advance my rook pawns is a good strategy here. Firstly I will advance my a-pawn all the way to a6, which will create the threat of exchanging all the rooks with ♖b7 and thus forcing a winning pawn ending. Then I will advance also my h-pawn, seeking weaknesses on the kingside. A good start is by **29.a5 ♖b8 30.h4 ♖b5 31.a6**.

PLAN B

Exchanging a pair of rooks will minimise any potentional black counterplay. So, I can opt for **29.♖ec3**, planning ♖c8 or ♖c7, securing the exchange of a pair of rooks. Then my king can safely advance and

my kingside pawns can be pushed without risks.

PLAN C

I do not feel any need to exchange my rooks, as mine are standing better. But of course I should seek the creation of new weaknesses and for this I will have to use my h-pawn. So, I should push my h-pawn by **29.h4**, intending h5-h6. Then I will advance the rest of my kingside pawns.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 45

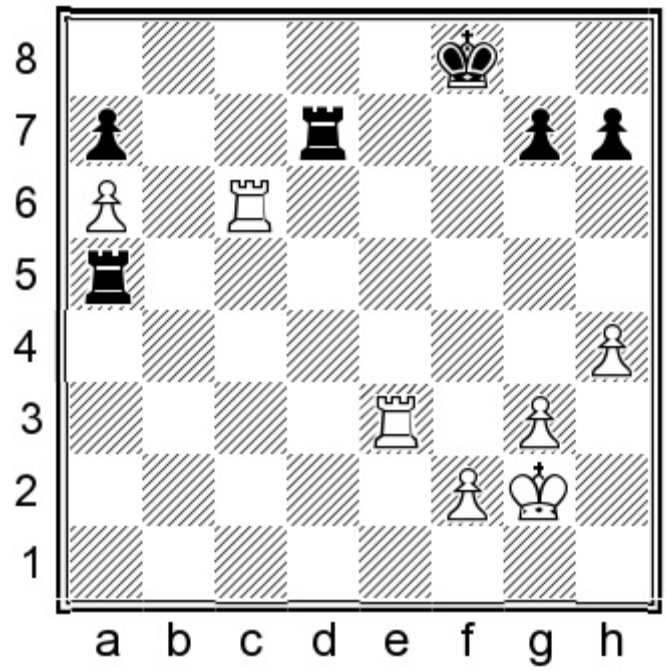
Plan A is best — see the game.

Plan B is not bad, but in no need, at least for the time being.

Plan C is also possible, but White will need his pawn to a6 sooner or later.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**40**	**45**

29.a5! ♖b8 30.h4 ♖b5 31.a6 ♖a5 32.♔g2



32...♖a2

A better defensive try is 32...g6, though it will not change the result. White will prepare the advance h4-h5 under favourable circumstances.

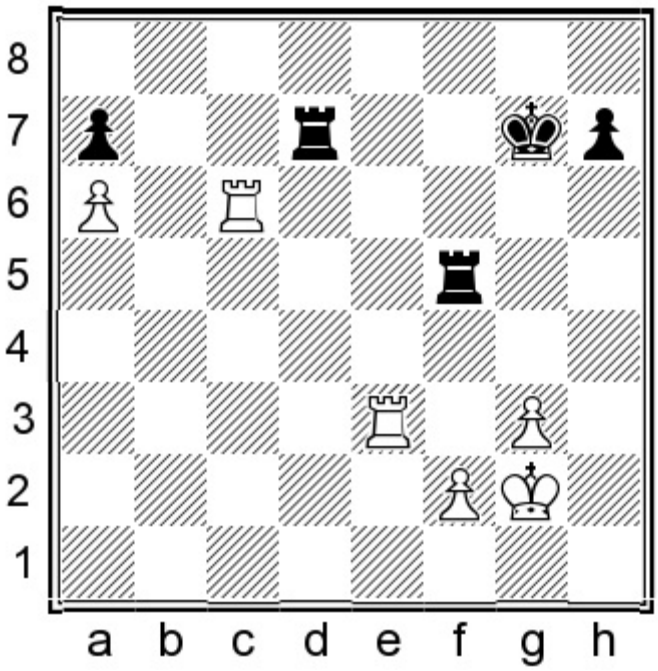
33.h5! ♖a5

The alternative 33...h6 34.♖c8+ ♔f7 35.♖f3+ ♔e6 (35...♔e7 36.♖g8 ♔e6 37.♖e8+) 36.♖e8+ ♔d6 37.♖d3+ ♔c7 38.♖xd7+ ♔xd7 39.♖g8, also leads to a White victory.

34.h6! gxh6

After 34...g6, the white pawns on a6 and h6 would fix the black ones on a7 and h7, making the threatened ♖b3-b8-h8 or ♖b3-b7 decisive. On the other hand, White has now added the passed f-pawn to his list of advantages.

35.♖xh6 ♔g7 36.♖c6 ♖f5



37.♖ec3!

By threatening to exchange rooks White forces the black pieces to occupy passive positions.

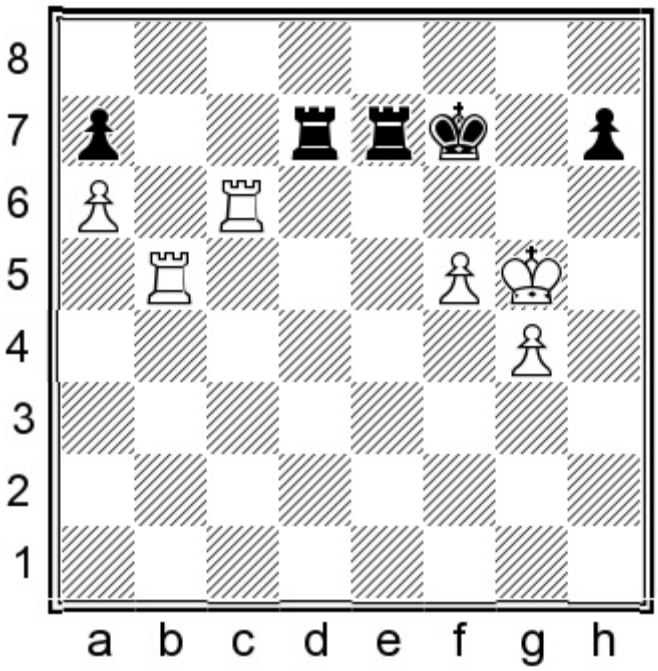
37...♖ff7

37...♔g8 38.♖c7 ♖ff7 39.♖xd7 ♖xd7 40.♖b3! and 41.♖b7, or 37...♖d2 38.♖c7+ ♔g6 39.♖f3.

38.f4

It is now the turn of the other white pawns and the king to enter the battle. Black is forced to await his end passively.

38...♖fe7 39.♔h3 ♖f7 40.♖3c5 ♔f8 41.♔h4 ♔e7 42.♖b5 ♔f8 43.f5 ♖fe7 44.g4 ♔f7 45.♔h5 ♖e1 46.♔g5 ♖ee7



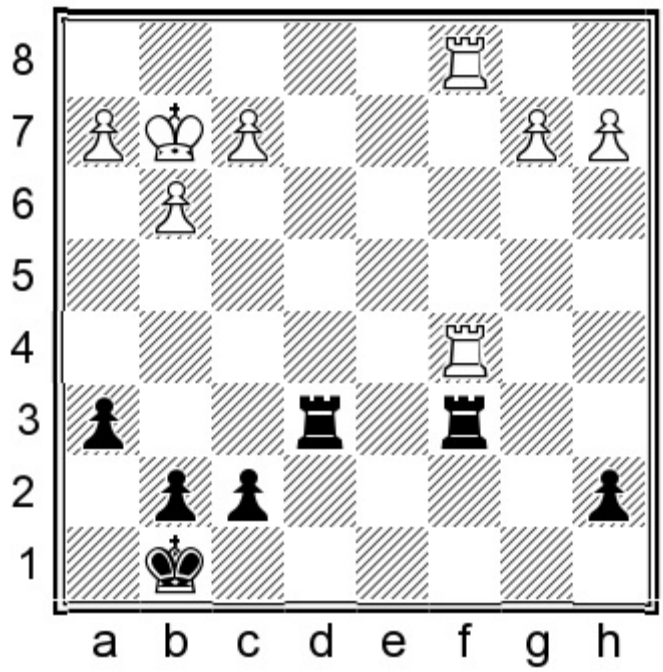
47.♖b8

Black resigned, as the threats of 48.♖h6 or 48.♖h8 ♔g7 49.f6+ ♔xh8 50.♖c8+, are conclusive.

1–0

EXERCISE 46
Grivas Efstratios
Cheng Zerlene
E16 Kavala 1984

30.♖xc5



EVALUATION

A characteristic rook ending, where I will have to make a crucial decision regarding the exchange (or not) of one pair of rooks. Anyway my chances to survive are limited, but this is what I have and I am obliged to live with it — I must only make my opponent's life as hard as I can, by opposing problems to be solved.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I feel that I have to preserve all rooks on board, as then I could seek counterplay. Of course, this decision has both positive and negative sides. The side that will succeed in activating its rooks to the maximum will succeed on his aims. So, I will opt for **30...♖a6 31.a3 ♖ab6 32.b4 ♖a6 33.♖1c3 ♖e2**, seeking counterplay.

PLAN B

I feel that I will have to try my chances in a single rook ending by **30...♖xc5 31.♖xc5 ♖e2**. After with **32.♖a5 ♖xb2 33.♖xa7 h5**, I will have good drawing chances.

PLAN C

Similar to Plan A, I feel that I should preserve all rooks on board, but on a different way: **30...♖cd6**, with ideas of entering the 1st or 2nd rank. After **31.♖1c2 g6 32.h4 h5**, I can put-up a tenacious defence.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 46

Plan A is the second best — see the game.

Plan B is not bad (under the circumstances), but White can anyway prevail — see the analysis.

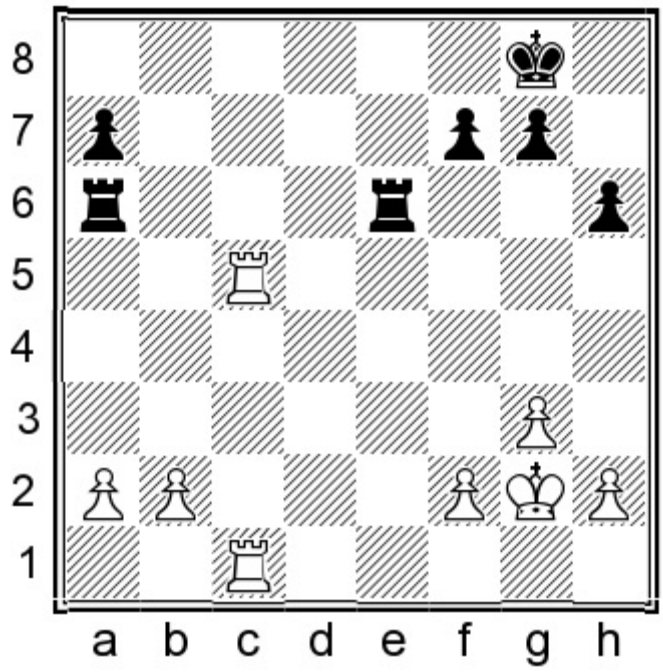
Plan C is the best, as the black rooks are a bit more active than in Plan A.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
45	**40**	**50**

30...♖a6

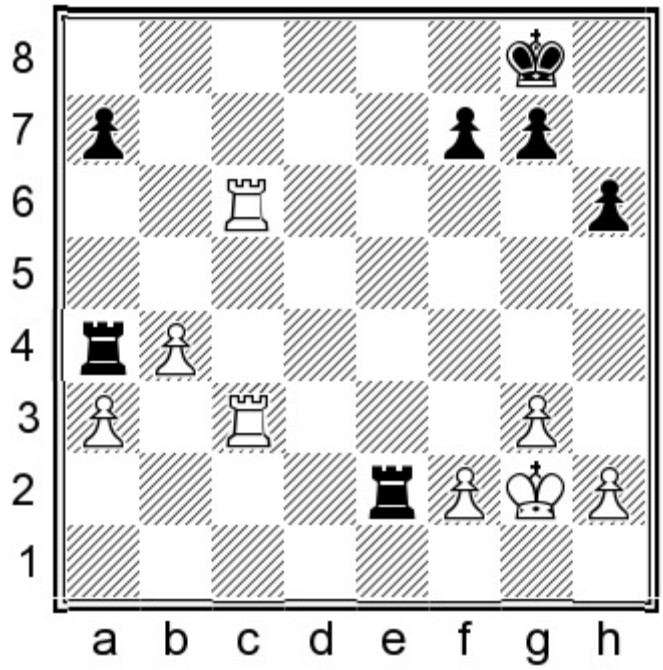
After 30...♖xc5 31.♖xc5 ♖e2, White will not continue with 32.♖a5? ♖xb2 33.♖xa7 h5!, as Black will then be almost certain of a draw, but with the strong 32.♖b5!. He will then advance his queenside pawns and improve the placement of his king. At a given moment he will give up one of his kingside pawns to win the black a-pawn. After the completion of this plan White will have obtained two connected passed pawns on the queenside, which will prove too strong for the black army. Black will correspondingly have a 3:2 kingside majority, which will logically prove harmless.

30...♖a6



31.a3 ♖ab6 32.b4 ♖a6 33.♖1c3 ♖e2 34.♖c6! ♖a4

Black decided that after 34...♖xc6 35.♖xc6 ♖e7 36.b5, he would have no chances of survival, as he would be completely lacking counterplay. On the other hand, the a4-rook hardly looks attractive.



35.♖f3! ♖e7

Compulsory, as the 'active' 35...♖a2? 36.♖c8+ ♔h7 37.♖xf7 ♖2xa3 38.♖cc7, would be sufficient for White's victory.

36.g4!

Gaining space and preparing the advance of the white kingside pawns.

36...f6?!

This move weakens the light squares around Black's king. It was preferable to wait with 36...g6. It must be noted that Black cannot play; 36...a5? 37.♖a6!.

37.h4! ♖e5 38.h5

New targets have been created, such as the g7-pawn, and even mating threats on the back rank.

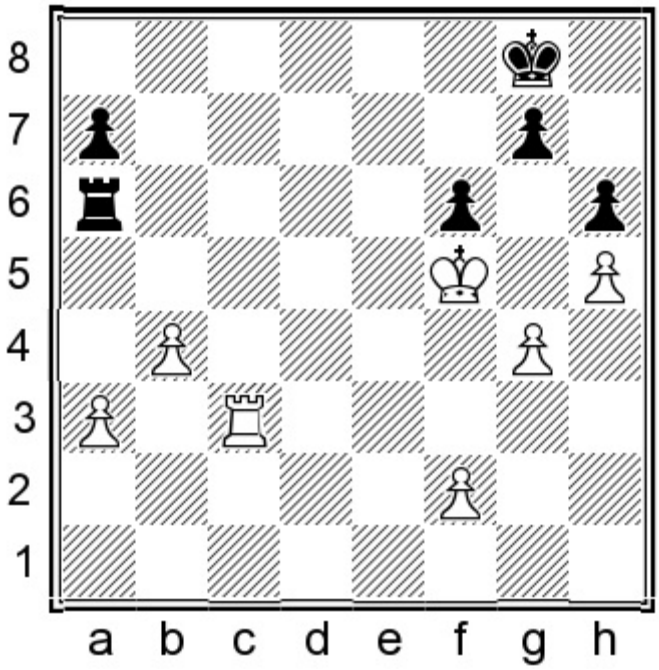
38...♖e7 39.♖d3 ♔f7 40.♔g3 ♖e6

Black no longer has any useful moves and succumbs to the exchange of a pair of rooks in order to activate his a4-rook.

41.♖c7+ ♖e7 42.♖xe7+ ♔xe7 43.♔f4 ♔e6 44.♖e3+ ♔f7 45.♔f5 ♖a6

45...a5 46.b5 ♖c4 47.♖b3+–.

46.♖c3 ♔g8



47.♔g6! f5+

The only move, in view of 48.♖c8#.

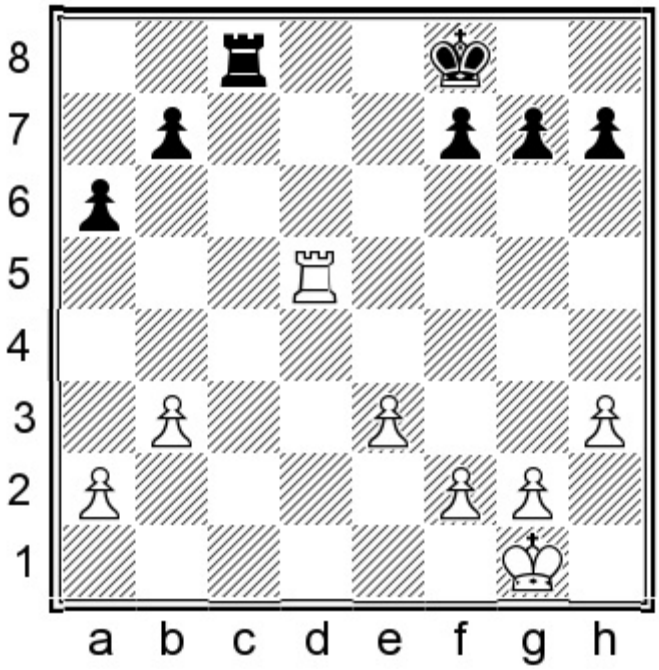
48.♔xf5 ♖f6+ 49.♔e5 ♖xf2 50.♖c7 ♖g2 51.♔f4 a5 52.bxa5 ♖a2 53.a6 ♖xa3 54.a7

Black resigned, as after the forced 54...♔h7, White simply transfers his king to b8 and promotes his pawn.

1–0

EXERCISE 47
Ribli Zoltan
Adorjan Andras
D32 Budapest 1979

24...♔f8



EVALUATION

So I stand a solid pawn up but I have no other advantages. My winning process will have to require much time, care and patience. The correct planning should consist of the following four parts: 1. Protect my queenside from Black's rook. 2. Force Black to create weaknesses in his kingside pawn formation. 3. By a judicious advance of my kingside pawns, expose and take advantage of Black's positional weaknesses. 4. With Black occupied on the kingside, make a decisive penetration on the queenside.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Going for the 7th rank can't be a bad decision. So, I can opt for **25.♖d7 ♖b8** and then I can simply advance my king in the centre, opting for complete domination.

PLAN B

Primary I will have to protect my queenside pawns and my 2nd rank from a rook invasion by **25.♖d2**. Then I will advance my king on the kingside, seeking further weaknesses. For the time being these actions should be enough.

PLAN C

My queenside pawns need protection and I cannot guard them by getting my rook passive. So, I will advance them by **25.a4 ♖c3 26.b4 ♔e7 27.b5 ♔e6 28.e4**, followed by my king's march on the kingside.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 47

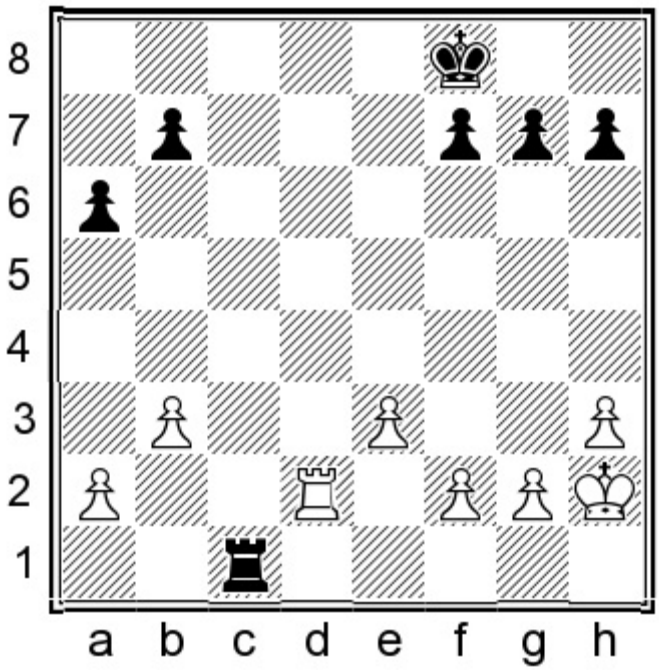
Plan A is bad. After **25.♖d7? ♖c1+! 26.♔h2 ♖c2 27.a4 b5 28.♔g3 ♖b2 29.♖d3 ♔e7**, Black's activity compensate his pawn deficit.

Plan B is best — see the game.

Plan C is a bad idea. After **28...♖c4! 29.bxa6 bxa6 30.♖a5 ♖xe4 31.♖xa6+ ♔e7**, we would have a drawn ending!

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
0	**50**	**0**

25.♖d2! ♖c1+ 26.♔h2



26...h5

Maybe Black should stay put with 26...♔e7.

27.♔g3 ♔e7 28.♔f4?!

Loses time. It would be more to the point to continue with 28.♔h4! g6 29.♔g5 and 30.♔h6, when White's king is active.

28...b5 29.♔e5 f6+ 30.♔f5 ♖c5+ 31.♔e4 g6 32.♔d3!

Since White's king cannot penetrate on the kingside, he tries to penetrate on the other wing. It is too early to advance the pawns, as White should create some weaknesses first.

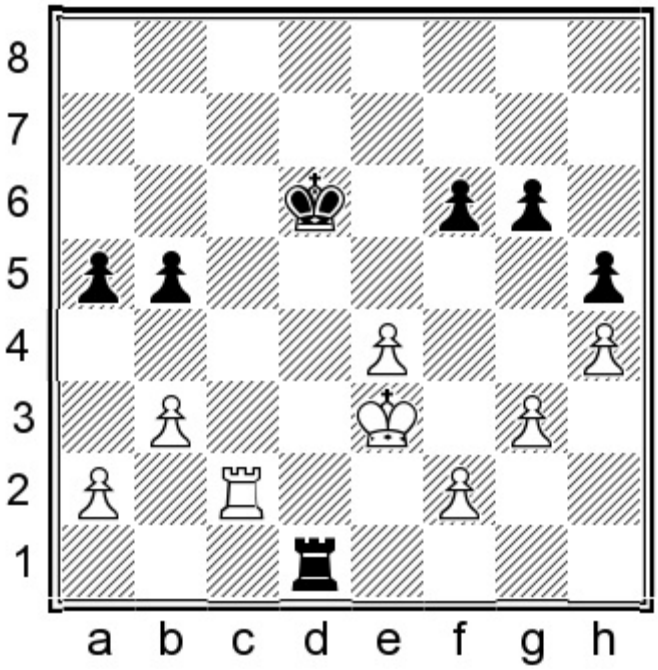
32...♖c1 33.♖c2 ♖d1+ 34.♔c3 a5

Forced, as otherwise White would penetrate with ♔b4.

35.♖d2 ♖c1+ 36.♔b2 ♖g1! 37.g3 ♔e6 38.♔c3 ♔e5 39.♔d3 ♖h1 40.♖c2 ♔d5!

Black cannot allow 41.♖c5+.

41.e4+ ♔d6 42.h4 ♖e1 43.♔d4 ♖d1+ 44.♔e3



44...♖a1!

Black correctly keeps the white pawns under attack. By this way he is not allowing the white pieces to become active.

45.♔f4 ♔e6 46.f3! ♔d6 47.♖g2!

Prophylaxis! It would be too early to go for 47.e5+? fxe5+ 48.♔g5, because Black gets sufficient counterplay: 48...♖g1! 49.g4 e4!.

47...♔e6 48.♖d2!

With his rook's manoeuvres, White has put Black very close to zugzwang. If Black's rook moves then decisive is 49.♖d5 and if Black's king moves, then decisive is 49.e5.

48...b4!

Best. After 48...a4 49.bxa4 bxa4, White can put Black into zugzwang: 50.♖c2! ♔d6 51.♖b2! ♔e6

52.♖d2 a3 53.♖e2! ♔d6 54.♖c2! ♔e6 55.♖d2!. Now a king move loses to 56.e5! and a rook move loses to 56.♖d3!.

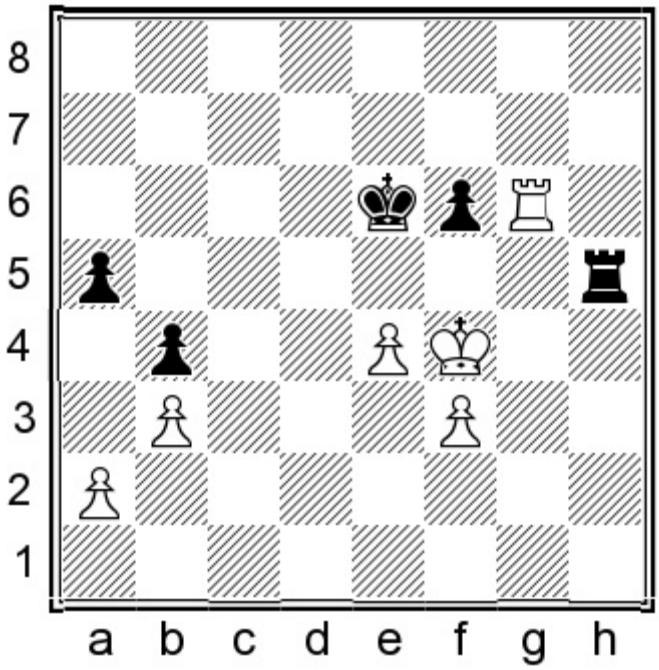
49.♖c2 ♔d6 50.♖g2 ♖d1!

Black must prevent the thematic zugzwang position arising after 50...♔e6 51.♖d2. But now White can execute his kingside advance.

51.g4!

Again 51.e5+?, would be wrong: 51...fxe5+ 52.♔g5 ♖f1! 53.♔xg6 ♖xf3 and Black's passed pawn will provide sufficient counterplay.

51...♖h1! 52.gxh5 ♖xh4+ 53.♖g4 ♖xh5 54.♖xg6 ♔e6



55.♖g2!

Protecting again the 2nd rank, while getting the rook into position to swing it to the 5th or 8th rank. The exchange of the kingside pawns has yielded the following benefits to White:

1. The f5-square for his king.

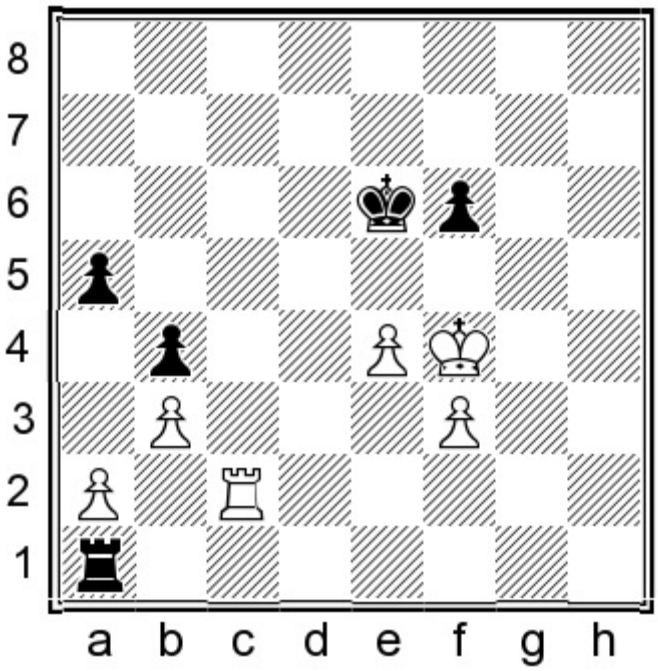
2. The 5th rank is now much more accessible to White's rook for attacking the black a-pawn. White will try to set up a position where both of these factors will come into play.

55...♖h4+?!

This loses because White will be able to put Black into zugzwang. A.Adorjan published a lengthy analysis to demonstrate that Black can draw after 55...♖c5!?. His main line is 56.♖d2 a4! 57.♖d4 a3! 58.♖xb4 ♖c2 59.♖b6+ ♔e7 60.♔f5 ♖c5+ 61.♔g4 ♖g5+ 62.♔f4 (62.♔h3 ♖h5+ 63.♔g2 ♖c5!) 62...♖g2 63.♖a6 ♖xa2 64.♔f5 ♖f2 65.f4 a2 66.b4 ♔d7! 67.b5 ♔c7! 68.e5 fxe5 69.♔xe5 ♖e2+. In this position Black's king can hold the b-pawn, while the rook can hold the f-pawn, thus it is a draw. But the analysis is not entirely correct, as White can play 59.♖a4! ♖xa2 60.♖a7!, when Black again is in zugzwang: 60...♖a1 (60...♔d6 61.b4 ♔e6 62.♖a6+ ♔e7 63.♔f5 ♖b2 64.♖xa3 ♖xb4 65.♖a7++–)

61.♖a6+ ♔e7 62.♔f5 ♖a2 63.f4+–.

56.♔e3 ♖h1 57.♖c2! ♖e1+ 58.♔f4 ♖a1



59.♖h2!

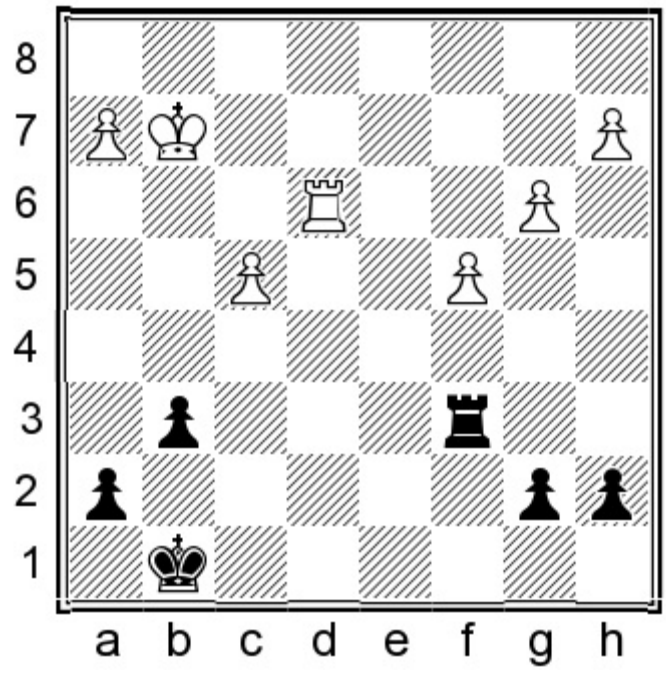
Putting Black into zugzwang again. If Black's rook moves, 60.♖h5, wins.

59...♔f7 60.♔f5! ♖c1 61.♖h7+ ♔g8 62.♖a7!

1–0

EXERCISE 48
Olsen Filip Boe
Grivas Efstratios
A81 Aarhus 2019

32.♖xe3



EVALUATION

I am facing a difficult defence, as I am a healthy queenside pawn down. And what makes things worse is that I do not see any counterplay, baring the heavy time trouble I am also facing. The only plus I can see is the somehow weak white kingside pawns but I am quite far even to attack them.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Approaching with my king to the centre looks natural. After **32...♔f7 33.♖e5** (**33.♔g3 ♖d6**, seems good for me) **33...♖a6** (**33...♖d6 34.♖d5!**) **34.a4 ♖d6 35.♖b5** (**35.♖d5 ♔e6!**) **35...b6 36.♔f3 ♖d2 37.h4**, White is in charge but I am fighting.

PLAN B

As activity is above all, I should try **32...b5!? 33.♖c3** (**33.cxb5 ♖c2+ 34.♔g3 ♖xa2=**) **33...♔f7 34.♔f3 ♖c5 35.♔e4 bxc4 36.♖xc4** (**36.bxc4 ♔e6 37.♔d4 ♖f5=**) **36...♖h5 37.♖c7+ ♔e6 38.♖xa7 ♖xh2 39.a4**. It looks like White will prevail due to his queenside duo, but things are not that easy: **39...h5 40.♖b7 ♖f2! 41.♔e3 ♖f1 42.b4 h4 43.♖h7 ♔f5!** (**43...♖a1? 44.a5 ♖b1 45.f5+!** [**45.♖xh4? ♔f5! 46.♖h8 ♖xb4 47.♖f8+ ♔g4 48.♖f6 g5 49.fxg5 ♔xg5=**] **45...gxf5 46.♖xh4 ♔d5 47.♔d3 ♖d1+ 48.♔c2 ♖a1 49.♔b2 ♖a4 50.♔b3 ♖a1 51.♖f4 ♔e5 52.♖f2 f4 53.♔c4 ♔e4 54.♔b5 ♔e3 55.♖h2 f3 56.♔a6!+–**) **44.♖xh4 ♖b1 45.b5 ♖b4 46.♖h7 ♖xa4 47.b6 ♖b4 48.b7 ♔e6=**. Not sure about all, but I have to lose.

PLAN C

I feel that I should activate my rook and this is best done by **32...♖a6 33.a4 ♖d6**, when I can find counterplay.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 48

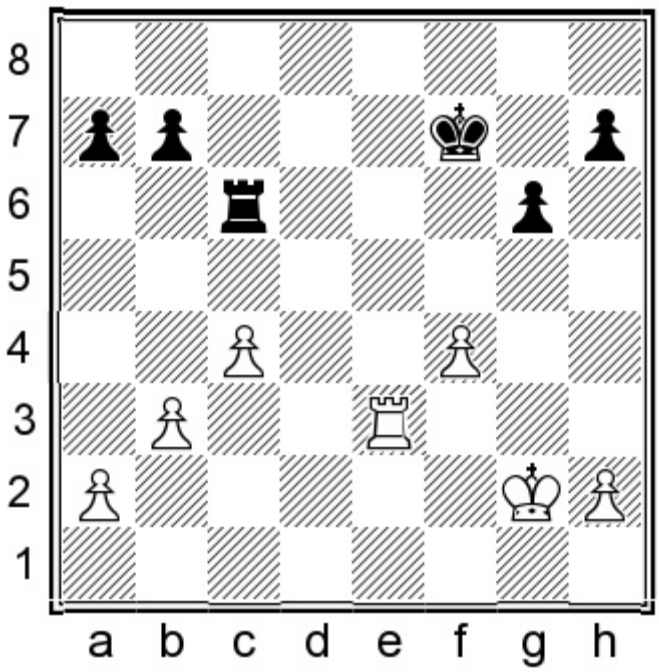
Plan A is the worst — see the game.

Plan B is best; Black should hold!

Plan C is the second best — rook activity is obligatory!

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
15	**50**	**30**

32...♔f7?



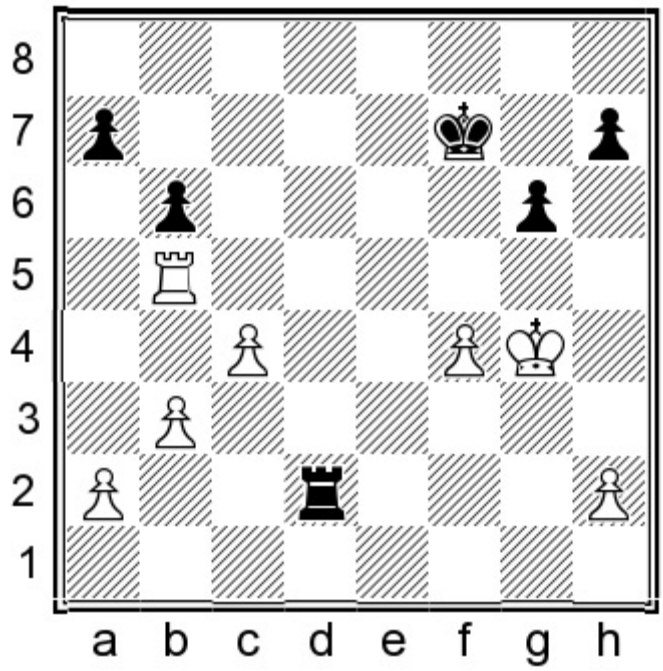
33.♔g3?

Accurate is 33.♖e5! ♖a6 (33...♖d6 34.♖d5!) 34.a4 ♖d6 35.♖b5 (35.♖d5 ♔e6!) 35...b6 36.♔f3 ♖d2 37.h4±.

33...♖d6!

Activity is the main factor in rook endings!

34.♖e5 ♖d3+ 35.♔g4 ♖d2 36.♖b5 b6



37.a4 ♖b2?!

It seems that White's queenside duo should again be strong after 37...♖xh2! 38.a5 bxa5 39.♖xa5 h5+ 40.♔g3 ♖c2 41.♖xa7+ ♔f6 42.♖b7, but after 42...♖c3+ 43.♔f2 ♔f5, Black is holding. Another difficult line to go for, especially in time trouble.

38.h3 ♔f6 39.♔f3 ♔e6

Easier is 39...♖h2! 40.♔g3 ♖c2=.

40.♖e5+ ♔f6 41.♖b5 ♔e6 42.♔e4 ♔d6?!

Played without calculation and on general terms, trying to protect the queenside with the king. Good is 42...♖e2+! 43.♔d4 ♖f2=.

43.h4!

Now this pawn will create weaknesses on the kingside as well.

43...♔c6 44.a5 ♖e2+ 45.♔f3 ♖h2 46.♔g3 ♖h1?!

46...♖b2! 47.axb6 axb6 48.h5 ♖b1, should hold for Black.

47.axb6 axb6 48.f5! ♖b1

48...gxf5 49.♖xf5 ♖b1 50.♖b5 ♖d1 51.♔g4, is similar to the game.

49.♔f4

Not much is offered by 49.fxg6 hxg6 50.♔g4 ♖g1+=. Now Black should be on the alert...

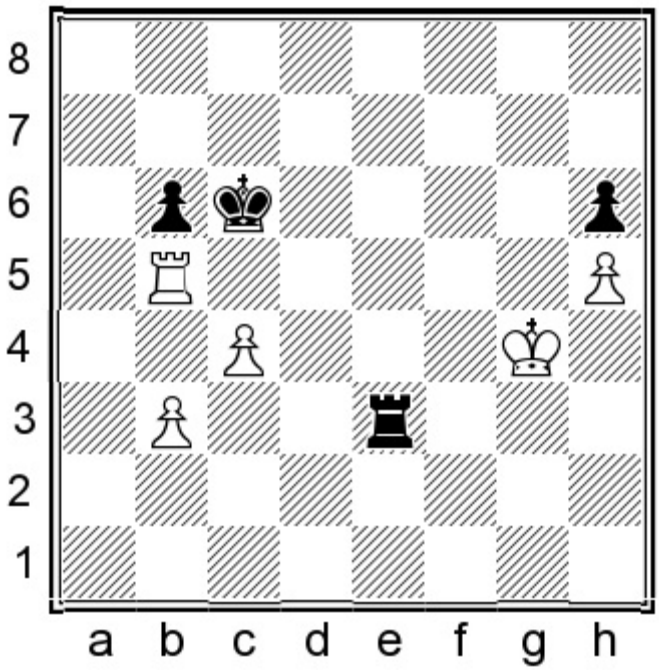
49...♖g1?

This loses. Black missed the drawing line with 49...♖f1+! 50.♔g5 gxf5 51.♖xf5 (51.h5 f4=) 51...♖xf5+ 52.♔xf5 ♔c5=.

50.fxg6 ♖xg6

50...hxg6, loses to 51.♖g5.

51.♖g5 ♖d6 52.♖b5 ♖f6+ 53.♔g5 ♖g6+ 54.♔f4 ♖f6+ 55.♔g4 ♖g6+ 56.♖g5! ♖e6 57.h5 ♖e3 58.♖b5 h6



The best practical chance, otherwise the white king will land on h6.

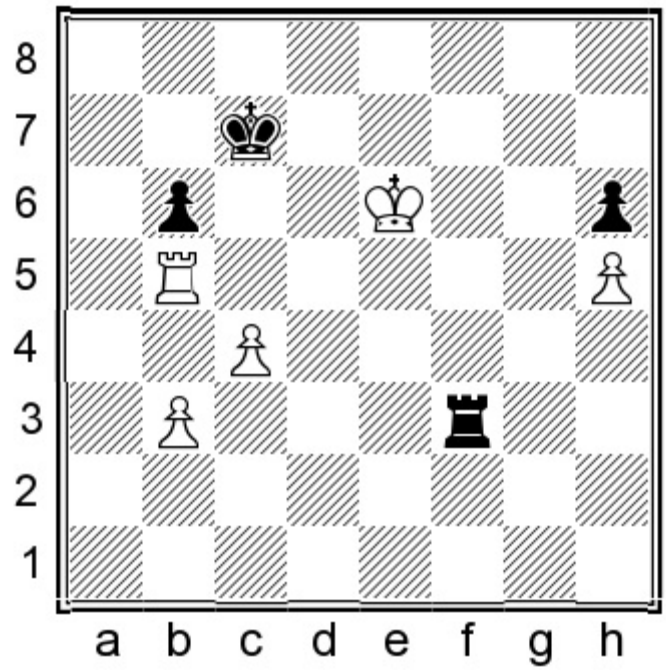
59.♔f5! ♖g3 60.♔f6 ♔c7 61.♔f7 ♔c6 62.♔e7?

White loses his way! 62.♖f5 ♖xb3 63.♔g7 ♖b4 64.♖f4 ♖b1 65.♔xh6 ♖g1 66.♖f5 ♖g4 67.♖g5 ♖xc4 68.♔g6+–, or 62.♔f8 ♔c7 63.♖f5 ♖xb3 64.♔g7+–, wins.

62...♖f3!

The black rook now stands ideally on f3, as the f5-square is a quite critical one! On f3 the rook cuts-off the white king from the kingside and attacks the b3-pawn as well.

63.♔e6 ♔c7!



64.♔d5

64.b4, is not dangerous: 64...♖f4! 65.c5 bxc5 66.♖xc5+ ♔b6 67.♔d5 ♖xb4 68.♖c6+ ♔b7=.

64...♖h3 65.♔d4 ♔c6

White now plays his 'last' trump:

66.b4 ♖h4+ 67.♔c3 ♖h3+ 68.♔c2 ♖h2+?

A blunder! Black should think again of the critical square and go for 68...♖f3! 69.♖e5 ♔d6! and White cannot make progress: 70.♖d5+ ♔c6 71.b5+ ♔c7 72.♖e5 ♔d6 73.♖e8 ♔c5=.

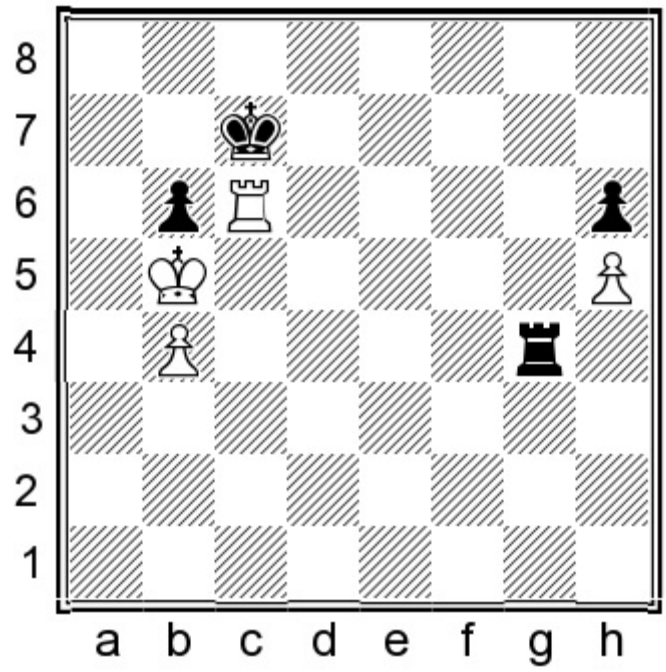
69.♔b3 ♖h3+

69...♖f2, now, loses to 70.♖e5 ♔d6 71.♖d5+ ♔c6 72.b5+ ♔c7 73.♖e5 ♔d6 74.♖e8. The white king has been improved and this is the main secret to White's win.

70.♔a4 ♖c3

70...♖f3, loses to 71.c5! bxc5 72.♖xc5+ ♔b7 73.♖e5 ♖f7 74.♖e6 ♖h7 75.♔b5.

71.♖f5! ♖xc4 72.♖f6+ ♔c7 73.♔b5 ♖g4 74.♖c6+



And Black resigned. A badly played ending by both players!

1–0

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QUEEN POWER

Queen endings are one of the most difficult and at the same time interesting types of endings. The difficulty lies in the usually immense number of variations and moves that occur due to the corresponding mobility of the most powerful chess piece, the queen.

The rules that govern queen endings are many and significant. The side with the advantage, either a material or a positional one, has several ways in which to seek victory, such as a direct attack aiming at checkmate, the exploitation of a passed pawn, the constant pressure on a weak pawn structure or, finally, the conversion of a material plus.

The defending side mainly has one single aim, perpetual check, although it is not necessarily unique. In this specific type of ending we encounter certain special characteristics, brought to the fore by the great power of the queen. Thus, the problem of the defending side delivering perpetual check is not the only one facing the attacker.

In an effort to formulate some rules, we arrive at the following:

SOS Tip 1 — Queen Ending Rules

1. In several cases, there exists (usually for the side with the advantage) the possibility to attack the enemy king, aiming for checkmate, by penetrating deep into the enemy camp with the king, in cooperation with the queen. This is a special case, which can prove useful in endings with few pawns (e.g. ♕ + 3 pawns vs ♕ + 2 pawns, with all pawns on the same side). Winning chances are clearly superior to those in any kind of related rook ending.
2. The king is better protected from perpetual check when he penetrates the enemy camp or attacks enemy pawns, than when he passively stays ‘at home’, inadequately protected by his pawns. In the first case the king has more squares at his disposal, while the task of the checking enemy queen is complicated by the necessity to also protect squares and pawns. Consequently, an attack on an enemy pawn is the surest way to evade a series of checks, as even the queen is unable to simultaneously deliver constant checks while also protecting the pawn.
On the other hand, in certain positions it is simpler not to capture the enemy pawn, intending to use it as a cover from the checks.
3. A stabilised centre greatly favours the attacking side, but even in open positions a centralised queen deprives its counterpart many checking possibilities.
4. A weak complex of squares around the enemy king can be occupied by the king-queen duo, leading to their penetration into the enemy lines.
5. The queen cannot be prevented from escorting a passed pawn all the way to the 8th rank. Possession of a passed pawn usually is the most decisive factor. It can decide an equal ending or save an inferior one, often even while being several pawns down.

6. In most other types of endings, two connected passed pawns would confer upon their possessor a huge advantage, but in queen endings this isn't particularly significant, as even an isolated passed pawn can be efficiently supported and advances. In queen endings, how far is a pawn advanced is more significant than in any other ending.
7. If the king of the defending side has been placed in front of the enemy passed pawn, then the draw is usually simple. Moreover, the king of the attacking side must not be placed in front of its pawn.
8. The attacking side must aim to place its king on the same or neighbouring rank (or file) to the opponent's king (this advice also applies when there is a large number of pawns on the board).
9. The more advanced a passed pawn is, the less are the opponent's chances to draw the game.
10. When there exists a passed pawn on a rook- or knight-file, the king of the defending side should aim to place itself near the corner diametrically opposed to that of the pawn's queening square. In this way the attacking side has less opportunities of avoiding perpetual check, as the possibilities of giving a check that would force a queen exchange are reduced. For a rook pawn, drawing chances are significantly higher than for any other, as in a large number of cases the defending side can proceed to a queen exchange.
11. The closer the passed pawn is to the edge of the board, the greater the drawing chances. With central pawns, as well as those on the c- or f-file, practically all positions with a remote defending king are lost. With pawns on the b- or g-file many are lost, while with rook pawns, in the majority of cases the draw is within reach, although even here the defence remains difficult.
12. The queen must be placed on central squares (this usually also applies to the queen of the defending side). The closer the attacking queen is to the edge of the board, the tougher the win; in addition, the possibility of the defending side delivering perpetual check is significantly higher.

QUEEN VS PAWN

In queen vs pawn endings things are simple. The queen wins against any pawn that has not reached its 7th rank. With a pawn on the 7th, the queen is unable to win against an a-, c-, f- or h-pawn.

In order to comprehend why, we must be familiar with the winning process against a-, b-, d-, e- or g-pawn that has reached its 7th rank.

Consequently, the queen can win only in cooperation with the king. An important exception occurs in some positions with a rook pawn.

QUEEN VS PAWNS

In general, the queen wins more easily against two and three pawns, while against four or more the placement of the pawns is of primary importance, with every result possible. The queen is a powerful piece, but in exceptional cases can be made to look very weak...

QUEEN & PAWN VS QUEEN

The outlines of this ending are best described by rule 11.

In general, we can say that the queen & pawn vs queen ending is won when the pawn is on the c-, d-, e- or f-file and has reached the 7th rank, while with edge pawns (a-, b-, g-, h-) there are good drawing chances.

The defending king, when unable to place himself in front of the pawn, must move as far away as possible. A badly placed defending king is of great help to the attacking side.

QUEEN & TWO PAWNS VS QUEEN

The inferior side has drawing chances only when its king is in front of the pawns. In comparison with the previous section, the additional pawn offers protection from checks to the attacking king. Naturally, the more central the pawns the easier the victory.

MATERIAL ADVANTAGE

In most endings of this type, the side with the material plus has the first word. However, it is not only material that counts, but also other factors, such as king safety and queen activity.

POSITIONAL SUPERIORITY

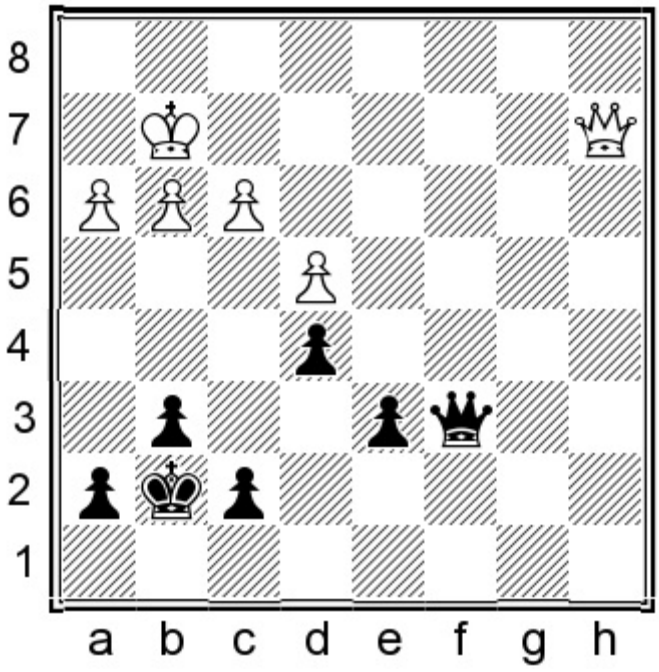
Obviously, no ending is drawn when one side possesses positional advantages over the other. Queen endings, even with reduced material, could not possibly be an exception.

We often encounter the myth that queen endings are usually drawn, because at some point (in a vague sense) perpetual check will occur!

Perhaps there is a little dose of truth in this aphorism, but what finally matters is the specific advantage and the way we will exploit it.

EXERCISE 49
Rajkovic Dusan
Skembris Spyridon
A44 Sofia 1986

43.f3



EVALUATION

I have an extra pawn and in any other type of ending (e.g. a rook ending) my win would be impossible. In a queen ending, however, a material advantage of one pawn can prove decisive. In the future my king must assist the ...d5 advance in general.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I should enlarge the battlefield, so pawn exchanges in the kingside are welcomed — but not the central ones. In this way my king will have options to penetrate via both wings. I will start with **43...h5 44.h4** (White cannot really do without this move. If instead he follows a waiting policy, after **44.♕b2 g5 45.g4 h4 46.♕b1 ♕c5**, Black will penetrate to the important f4- and g3-squares, while his king will assist as well) **44...♕c5 45.♕d2 ♔f6** and so on.

PLAN B

Attacking the centre is a good idea, trying to create weaknesses. So, I will opt for **43...f5**, with ideas as ...♔f6, ...f4 or ...fxe4, anything that will suit me.

PLAN C

There is nothing directly that I can do, so I will opt for **43...♕c3 44.♕e2 h5 45.h4 ♕d4** (centralisation) and then bring my king to assist via the queenside.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 49

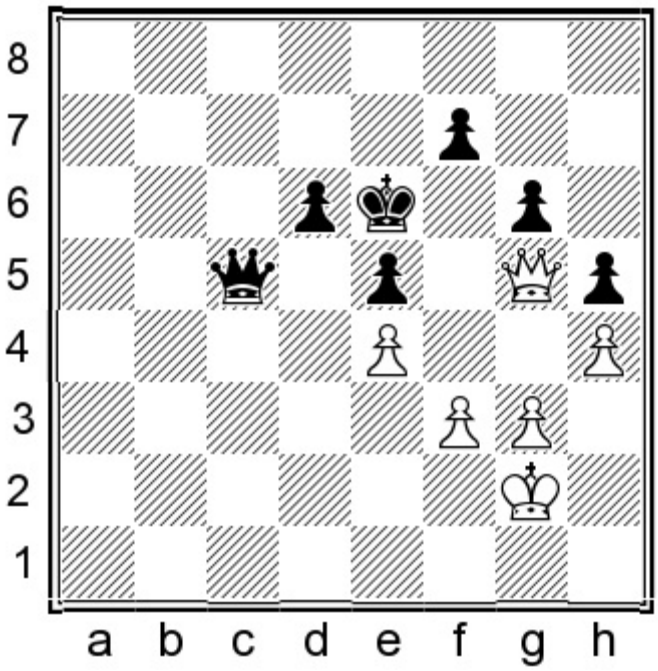
Plan A is the best — see the game.

Plan B is fine for White after **43...f5 44.exf5 gxf5 45.♕e6** or **44.♕a7+**.

Plan C is the second best — centralisation is obligatory!

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**50**	**40**

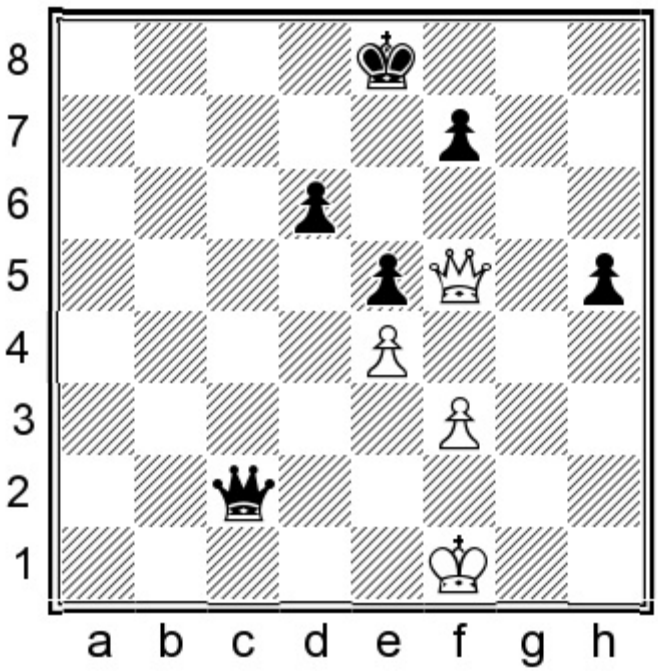
43...h5 44.h4 ♕c5 45.♕d2 ♔f6 46.♕g5+ ♔e6



47.g4

White seeks pawn exchanges, hoping to eventually reach a drawn queen & pawn vs. queen ending. Although it gives Black a future king path to the kingside, if White refrains from this advance, then Black will organise a future ...f5 break.

47...♕c2+ 48.♔f1 hxg4 49.♕xg4+ ♔e7 50.♕g5+ ♔e8 51.h5 gxh5 52.♕g8+ ♔e7 53.♕g5+ ♔d7 54.♕f5+ ♔e8



55.♕xh5

White has managed to keep the game close to a draw, but there is still a long way ahead in order to achieve this result. It is of great importance that Black's remaining pawns are central. If we move all the pawns two files to the right, then a draw would be most natural, as the black king has entrance

squares only from one side.

55...♕d1+ 56.♔f2 ♕d2+ 57.♔f1 ♔e7

Black will try to infiltrate White's lines with the king, initially via the kingside. Then he will exchange one more pawn (his d-pawn for the white e-pawn). Finally, the decisive invasion will be accomplished via the queenside. This whole plan appears simple in its conception and fully realisable. Besides, Black is risking nothing, as it is impossible to lose. In contrast, White must be constantly vigilant.

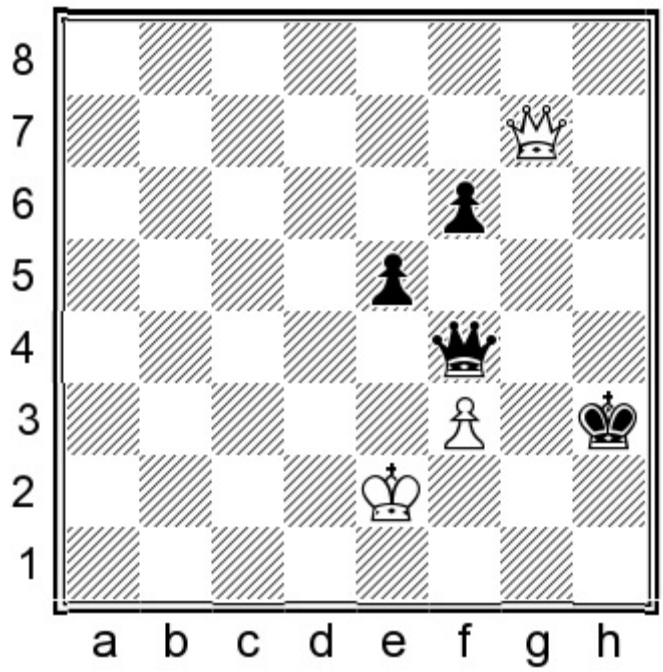
58.♕h4+ ♔d7 59.♕g4+ ♔c7 60.♕g8

If 60.♕f5, then 60...♕a2!, but not 60...♕f4? 61.♕xf4 exf4 62.♔e2 ♔c6 63.♔d3 ♔c5 64.♔c3 f5 65.exf5 ♔d5 66.f6 ♔e6 67.♔d4 ♔xf6 68.♔d5=.

60...♕f4 61.♔e2 d5!

The backward d-pawn is finally exchanged.

62.exd5 ♕c4+ 63.♔e3 ♕xd5 64.♕e8 ♔d6 65.♕d8+ ♔e6 66.♕e8+ ♔f5 67.♕c8+ ♕e6 68.♕c2+ ♔g5 69.♕g2+ ♔f6 70.♕b2 ♕f5 71.♕b6+ ♔g7 72.♕c7 ♕f4+ 73.♔e2 ♔g6 74.♕d6+ ♔g5 75.♕f8 ♔h4 76.♕g8 f6 77.♕h7+ ♔g3 78.♕g7+ ♔h3



79.♕g6!

No help is provided by 79.♕h7+? ♔g2 80.♕g6+ ♕g3! 81.♕xf6 ♕f2+!, as Black would win the resulting pawn ending.

79...♕c4+ 80.♔e3 ♕c1+ 81.♔e2 ♕f4 82.♕g7!

It is important for White to keep the white king away from the vital g2-square.

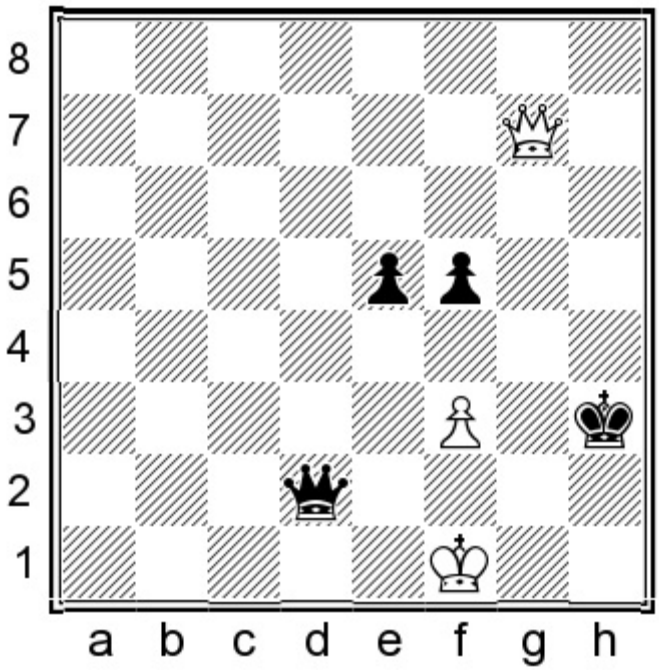
82...f5 83.♔f2?

White could defend with 83.♕g6! ♕c4+ (83...♕g3 84.♕xf5+ ♔g2 85.♕g4=) 84.♔f2 ♕d4+ 85.♔e2 ♕f4 86.♔f2 ♕d2+ 87.♔f1, when there is no way to improve...

83...♕d2+! 84.♔f1 ♕c1+?

Black wrongly tries to repeat the position in order to gain some time. He should directly go for 84...♕e3!.

85.♔f2? ♕d2+ 86.♔f1



86...♕e3!

Now Black 'found' the correct way and slowly but steadily improves the placement of every one of his pieces.

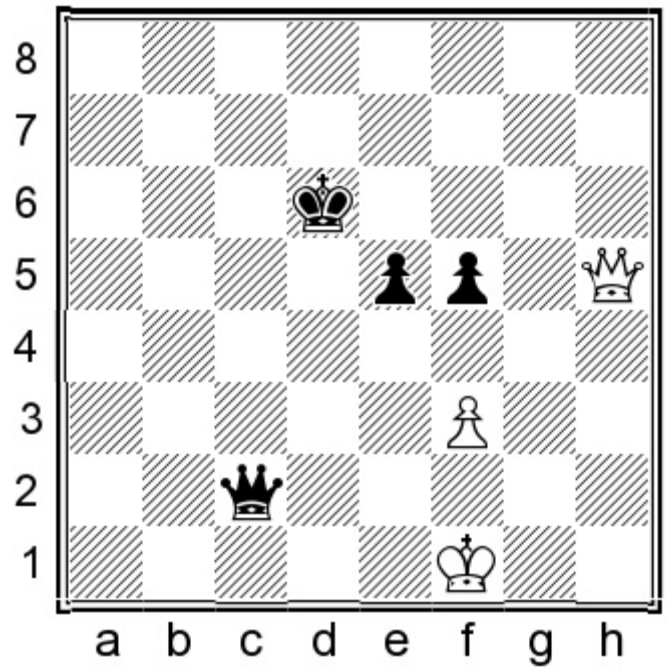
87.♕g2+ ♔h4 88.♕h2+ ♔g5 89.♕g3+ ♔f6

Since now the white queen is very passive, protecting her last pawn, Black commences the last stage of his plan: the infiltration of his king via the queenside.

90.♕h4+ ♔e6 91.♕h5

91.♕c4+ ♔d6 92.♕b4+ ♕c5 93.♕d2+ ♕d4 94.♕g5 ♕d3+ 95.♔f2 ♔c5.

91...♕d3+ 92.♔e1 ♔d6 93.♔f2 ♕d2+ 94.♔f1 ♕c1+ 95.♔f2 ♕c2+ 96.♔f1



96...f4!

White's queen must now keep an eye on the f-pawn to prevent its loss. But how can a queen simultaneously protect a pawn, prevent mating threats and try to give perpetual check?

97.♕g4 ♕h7 98.♔e2 ♕b1 99.♕h5 ♕c2+ 100.♔f1 ♕d3+ 101.♔f2 ♕e3+ 102.♔f1 ♔c5 103.♕h3 ♔b4 104.♕g4 ♔c3 105.♕c8+ ♔d2 106.♕a8 ♕d3+ 107.♔f2 ♕d4+ 108.♔g2 ♔e3 109.♕a3+ ♔e2 110.♕a6+

110.♕a2+ ♕d2 111.♕a8 ♕c2! 112.♕a6+ (112.♕e8 e4) 112...♔e3+.

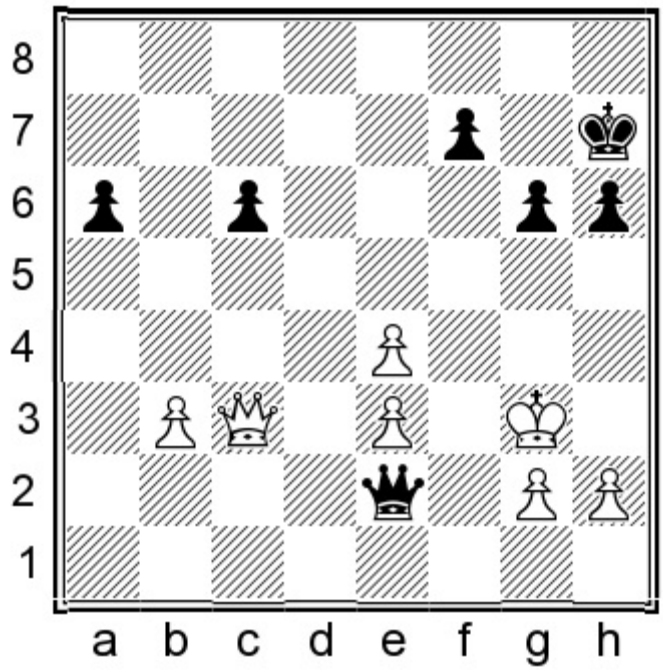
110...♕d3 111.♕c6 e4!

Resigned: 112.fxe4 f3+ 113.♔h2 f2.

0–1

EXERCISE 50
Kaplan Julio
Ivkov Borislav
C79 Sao Paulo 1973

34...♕e2



EVALUATION

I have weaknesses in my pawn structure but I think that I have good defending chances,. The opponent queen can simultaneously attack both my weak e-pawns while at the same time preventing the centralisation of my king. But of course there is a long way to go.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Reducing the material is nearly always a good idea in endings. So I will exchange my weak e3-pawn for Black's c-pawn, by **35.♕xc6 ♕xe3+ 36.♔h4**, when I feel that I should OK and near to the draw.

PLAN B

I should be very careful not to create further weaknesses or falling to passive positions. A good prophylactic idea for my king is to create a safe square on h2, so I will opt for **35.h3 a5 36.e5 ♕d1**, where I think that I am standing just slightly worst and I can defend.

PLAN C

My thoughts are similar to Plan B, but I think that it is good to push my h-pawn two squares, as in this way I can create counterplay with a timed h5. So, I will go for **35.h4 h5 36.♔h2** and defend.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 50

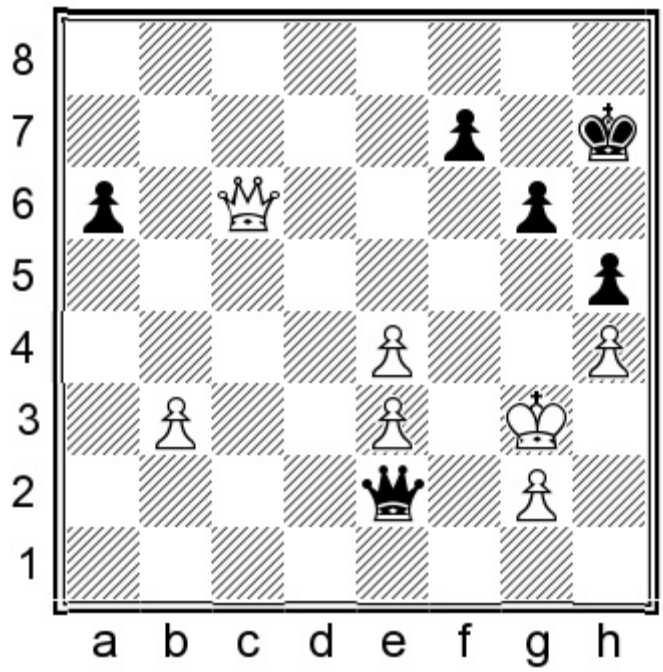
Plan A is blundering a mate: **36...g5+ 37.♔h5 ♕e2+ 38.g4 ♕xh2#**.

Plan B is the best — the analysis is correct.

Plan C is the second best — no necessity to create weaknesses — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
0	**50**	**40**

35.h4?! h5! 36.♕xc6?



But this is surely a bad mistake, as now White is suffering. A better try is 36.♔h2.

36...♕g4+!

The weakness on e3 can wait: 36...♕xe3+ 37.♔h2 ♕f4+ 38.g3 ♕f2+ 39.♔h3 ♕g1 40.e5 ♕f1+ 41.♔h2 ♕e2+ 42.♔h3 ♕xe5 43.♕xa6 ♕f5+ 44.♔g2 ♕c2+ 45.♔h1 ♕xb3 46.♕f6=+.

37.♔f2

No different is 37.♔h2 ♕xh4+ 38.♔g1 ♕e1+ 39.♔h2 ♕xe3 40.♕xa6 ♕xb3.

37...♕xh4+ 38.♔f1 ♕h1+ 39.♔f2 ♕a1 40.♕b6?!

40.♕d5 ♕f6+ 41.♔e2 (41.♔g3?! h4+ 42.♔g4 ♕f2!) 41...h4, is a preferable option.

40...h4 41.e5

Hoping for 41...♕xe5?! 42.♕xa6 ♕b2+ 43.♔f3 ♕xb3, when White would have imp-roved his position at a small material cost.

41...♕b2+! 42.♔f1 ♕b1+ 43.♔f2 ♕f5+ 44.♔e2 ♕e6! 45.♕d8

The pawn ending resulting from 45.♕xe6? fxe6 46.♔f3 g5 47.♔g4 ♔g6, would be a certain loss, as Black practically has an extra pawn, while 45.♕d4 g5 46.♕e4+ ♔h6, is not much different.

45...♕g4+ 46.♔e1 ♕g3+ 47.♔d1 h3!

47...♕xg2? 48.♕xh4+, with perpetual check can only be naive!

48.gxh3 ♕xh3

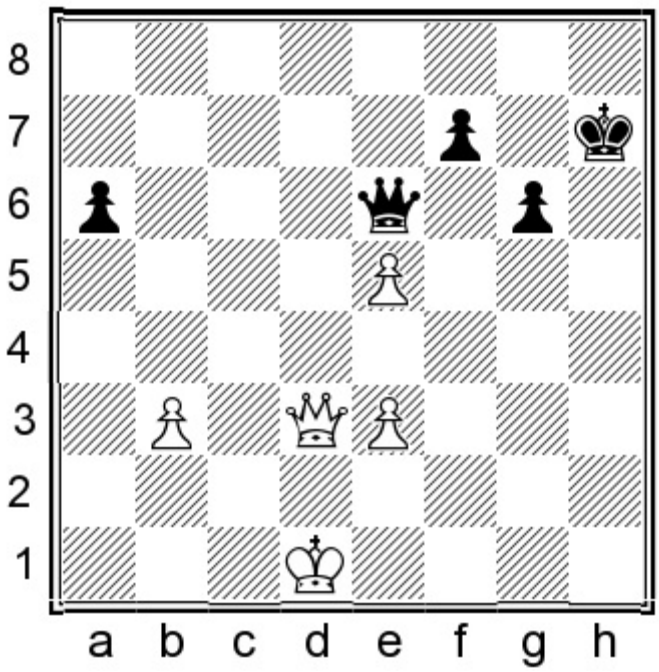
Black, practically, is a pawn up, as his g-pawn has no opponent.

49.♕d3?

49.♕d5 ♕e6∓, was a forced line for White.

49...♕e6?

Why not 49...♕h5+! 50.♔d2 ♕xe5 51.♕xa6 ♕b2+ 52.♔e1 ♕xb3–+.



50.b4!

An important attempt. Obtaining a passed pawn is the primary aim in queen endings.

50...♔h6!

If Black now continues with the pointless 50...♕xe5? 51.♕xa6 ♕xe3 52.b5, he will have nothing better than perpetual check.

51.♕d4

Or 51.♕d6 ♕b3+ 52.♔e2 (52.♔d2 ♕a2+) 52...♕c4+ 53.♔f3 ♔h5.

51...♔h5 52.♔e1 ♕g4 53.♕d6 ♕c4 54.♔f2 ♔g4 55.♕d7+

Or 55.♕d1+ ♔f5!, attacking the e5-pawn.

55...♔h4

The seemingly 'better' 55...♕e6?! 56.♕d4+ ♔h3 (56...♔f5?? 57.♕f4#) 57.♕f4 ♕a2+ 58.♔e1, is not that desirable for Black!

56.♕d8+

56.♕d4+ leads to a lost pawn ending: 56...♕xd4 57.exd4 ♔g4 58.d5 (58.♔e3 ♔f5 59.♔f3 g5 60.♔g3 ♔e4) 58...♔f5 59.d6 ♔e6 60.♔e3 f6 61.exf6 (61.d7 ♔xd7 62.exf6 ♔e6; 61.♔e4 fxe5 62.d7 ♔xd7 63.♔xe5 ♔c6) 61...♔xd6 62.♔f4 (62.♔d4 ♔e6 63.♔c5 g5) 62...♔e6 63.♔g5 ♔f7.

56...♔h3 57.♕d6

The checks run out after 57.♕h8+ ♕h4+, or 57.♕d7+ ♕e6.

57...♕e6 58.e4!? ♔g4 59.♔e3 ♔g3 60.♔d4 ♔f4?

A mistake in time trouble. 60...g5!, is good.

61.♕c7! ♔g4 62.♕d6?!

White had to try 62.♕c2 ♕d7+! (62...g5? 63.♕e2+ ♔h4 64.♕h2+) 63.♔e3 ♔g5! (63...g5 64.♕e2+, or 63...♔h3 64.♕e2) 64.♕g2+ ♔h6.

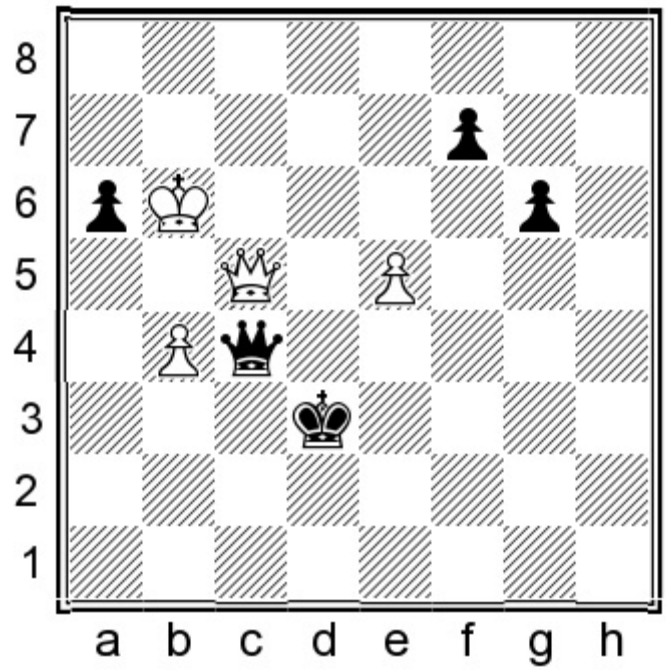
62...♔f3?!

The natural 62...g5!, first, is again better, as now White could have defended more stubborn with 63.♕d8!.

63.♔c5? ♔xe4 64.♔b6 ♕c4?!

64...g5 65.♔xa6 g4 66.b5 g3, is easier.

65.♕c5 ♔d3!



66.♔a5?!

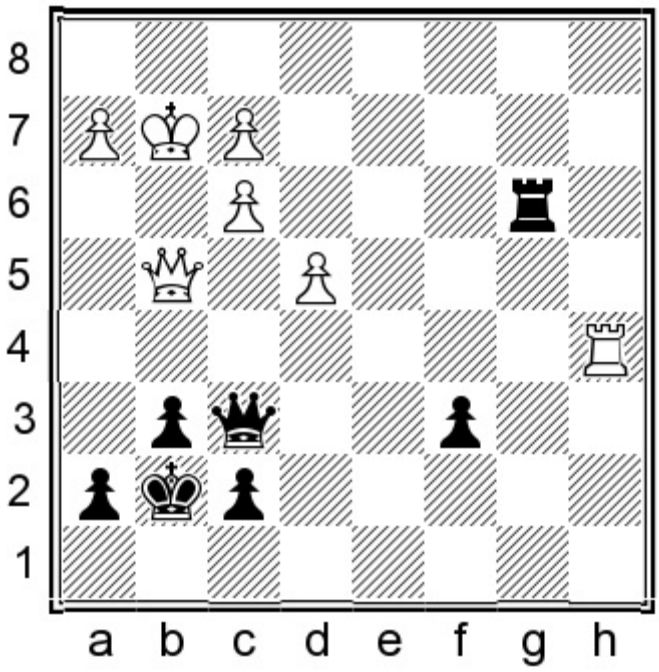
Or 66.♕d6+ ♔c3 and the white b-pawn will be lost. A better defensive try was 66.♕e7 ♔c3 67.♔a7. The end of the game is also quite instructive:

66...g5 67.♕d6+ ♔e4 68.♕c5 ♕b5+! 69.♕xb5 axb5 70.♔xb5 g4 71.♔c6 g3 72.b5 g2

0–1

EXERCISE 51
Karjakin Sergey
Mamedyarov Shakhriyar
C60 Berlin 2018

28.♕g4



EVALUATION

I have got the better position, mainly due to my opponent's inferior pawn structure and my passed, although not dangerous yet, c-pawn. But as long the white pieces stay active it is difficult to convert my advantage.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Centralisation is important and my assets will become visible soon. I can opt for **28...♕d4**, followed by ...♖b2 and ...c5, combining the attack on the white king with my passed c-pawn. The rule of the two weaknesses will be in full force here. Play could go as **29.h4 ♖b2 30.♕g3 h6**, when I am on the top.

PLAN B

In a queen ending White would be in real trouble, as the black (to be) b-pawn would be rather strong. So, I can opt for **28...♖b5**, forcing the rooks' exchange (**29.♖a6 ♖g5**) **29.♖xb5 cxb5 30.♕d7 ♕g5+ 31.♔f1 ♕c5 32.♔g2 b4**, where I would be clearly on the top.

PLAN C

I believe that it is better to opt for a rook ending, where my passed c-pawn will be a real asset. After **28...♖b2**, White is nearly forced to go for **29.♕g5 ♕xg5+ 30.♖xg5 f5 31.exf5 ♖b5 32.♖g4 ♖xf5**, with a clearly better rook ending.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 51

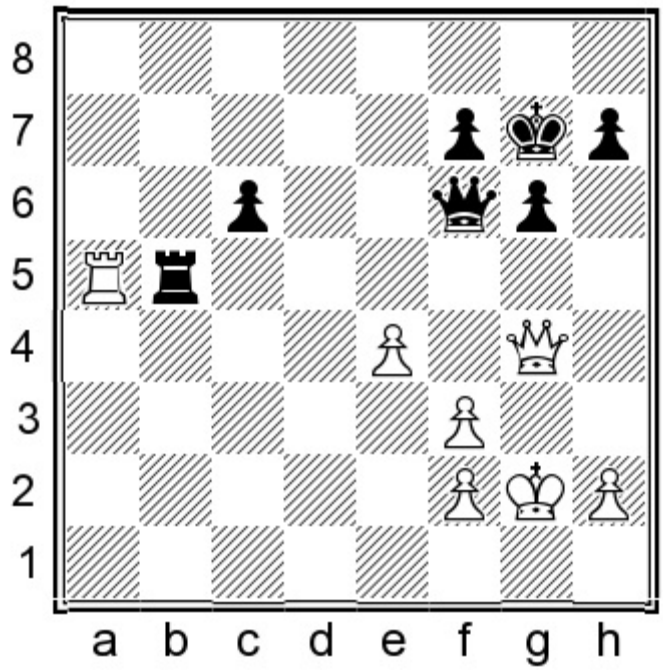
Plan A is the second best plan and can be chosen.

Plan B is the best — see the game.

Plan C is not bad, but White has a lot of saving resources.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
40	**50**	**30**

28...♖b5!



In the queen ending White would be in real trouble, as the black b-pawn would be rather strong. That's why White had to keep control on the b5-square.

29.♖xb5 cxb5 30.♕d7 ♕g5+ 31.♔f1 ♕e5?!

Much better was 31...♕c5 32.♔g2 b4∓.

32.h4 b4 33.♕b7!

The queen was ideally placed behind the passed pawn, attacking f7 as well.

33...♕c3 34.e5!

The only way that White can survive is to strip the enemy king, looking for perpetual check. For this he correctly advanced his pawns.

34...b3 35.♔g2

35.e6?, was losing to 35...♕c4+ 36.♔g2 ♕xe6. But now e6 it's a threat.

35...♕c4 36.♕b6?

36.♔g3, looked better. Here Black should try to create a second passed pawn with 36...♔h6 37.♕e7 ♕e6 38.♕f8+ ♔h5 39.♕c5 g5 40.hxg5 ♔xg5 41.f4+ ♔g6∓.

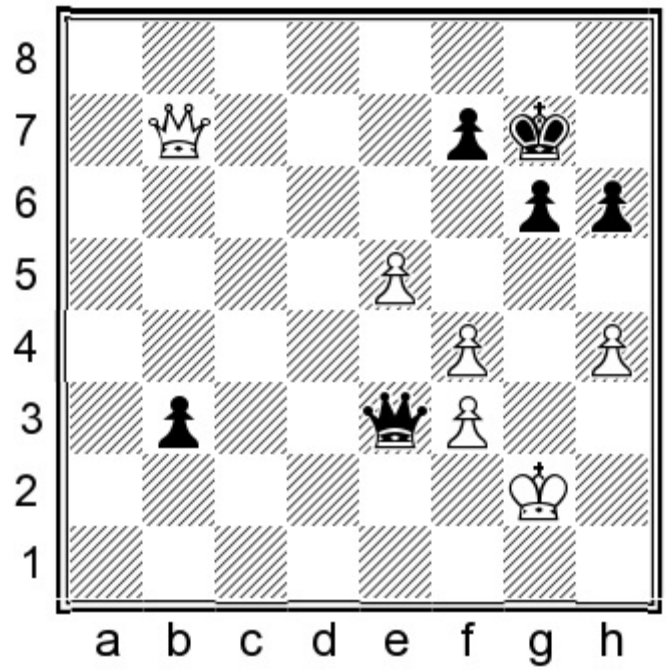
36...h6?

Returning the favour. Black could have gone for 36...♕xh4 37.♕xb3 ♕g5+ 38.♔f1 ♕xe5 and by advancing his king and his h-pawn he would have cashed the point.

37.♔g3 ♕d5 38.f4 ♔h7 39.♕b8 ♕c4 40.f3! ♕c3 41.♕f8 ♕c4 42.♕b8 ♔g7 43.♕b6 ♕d5 44.♕b8 ♕d1!? 45.♕b7 ♕g1+ 46.♔h3 ♕e3

46...♕b1 47.♔g3, wasn't really much.

47.♔g2!



47.♔g3?, would lose to 47...g5! 48.hxg5 hxg5 49.fxg5 ♕xe5+ 50.f4 ♕e3+ 51.♔g4 ♕e2+ 52.♔g3 b2.

47...♕e2+ 48.♔g3 ♕e1+ 49.♔g2?

49.♔h3!, was correct, when probably Black had nothing better that the 'best side of a draw' after 49...♕e3 50.♔g2 ♕xf4 51.e6 ♕f6 52.♕xb3 ♕xe6. Well, I have seen many endings won by Black in similar structures...

49...♕e3!

And now White got into in zugzwang, as here was the same position as on the 47th move, but it was now his turn to move! And that's a great problem, as all his pieces were ideally posted...

50.♕b4 g5! 51.hxg5 hxg5 52.fxg5 ♕e2+!

The winning idea. 52...♕xg5+? 53.♔f2, was a draw.

53.♔g3 ♕xe5+?

Greedy! Winning was 53...b2! 54.e6 ♕e5+ 55.♔g2 fxe6–+.

54.♔f2?

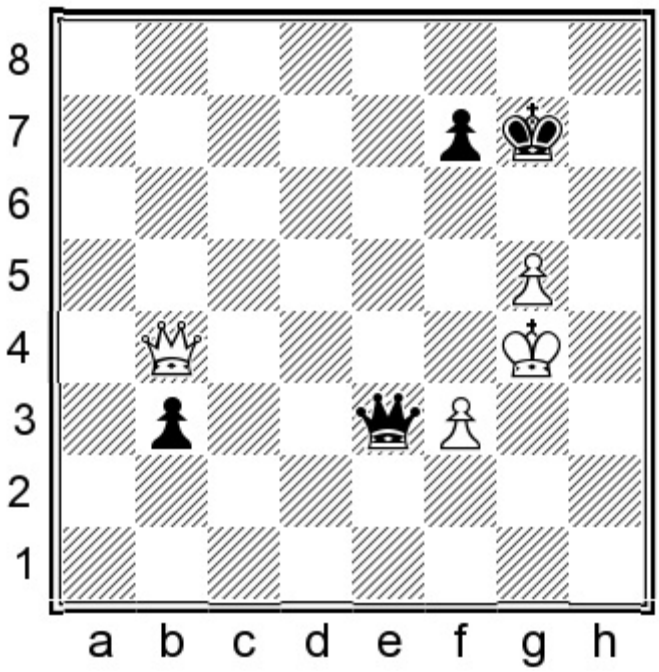
It is true that there were many mistakes in this difficult ending for such a high level. 54.f4! ♕d5 55.♔g4 ♕d3 56.f5, was holding. So, here we can observe in general the main defensive plan: staying with the king on the kingside and advancing the pawns, to strip the black king, aiming for perpetual check!

54...♕h2+! 55.♔e3 ♕g1+?

55...♕c2! 56.♕d4+ ♔g8 57.♕d8+ (57.♕d3 ♕c5+ 58.♔e2 ♕b6–+) 57...♔h7 58.♕f6 ♕g6 59.♕f4 ♕b6+ 60.♔d2 ♔g7 61.♔c1 ♕a6, Black would have included his king to attack the enemy pawns, cashing the point in the long run.

56.♔f4 ♕c1+ 57.♔g4 ♕e3

57...b2? 58.♕d4+ ♔h7 59.♕d3+, was an immediate draw.



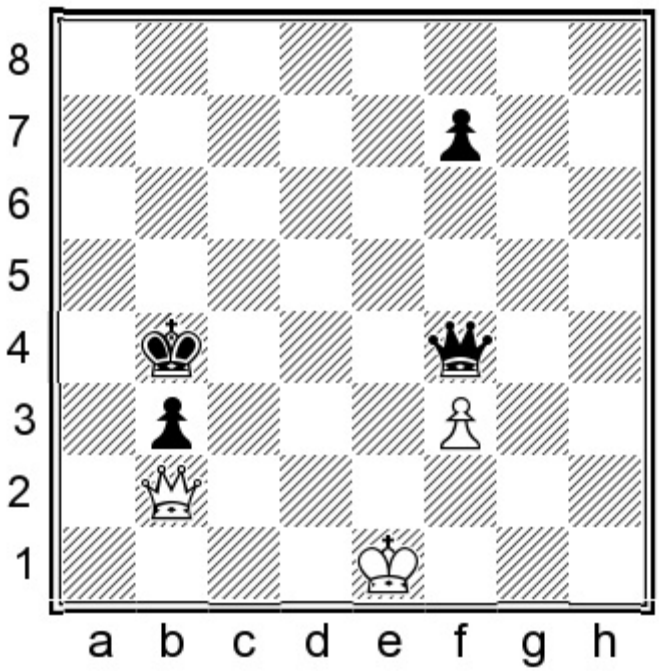
58.♔g3?

A lethal blunder! 58.f4!, was still holding: 58...♕g1+ 59.♔h4.

58...♕xg5+ 59.♔f2 ♕d5!

Centralisation! Here Black's plan was clear: moving the king to assist the b-pawn and try to make a queen exchange possible.

60.♔e3 ♔g6 61.♔e2 ♔f6 62.♔e3 ♔e6 63.♕b6+ ♔d7 64.♕a7+ ♔c6 65.♕a6+ ♔c5 66.♕a4 ♕c4 67.♕a5+ ♔c6 68.♕a1 ♔b5 69.♕b2 ♔b4 70.♔d2 ♕f4+ 71.♔e1



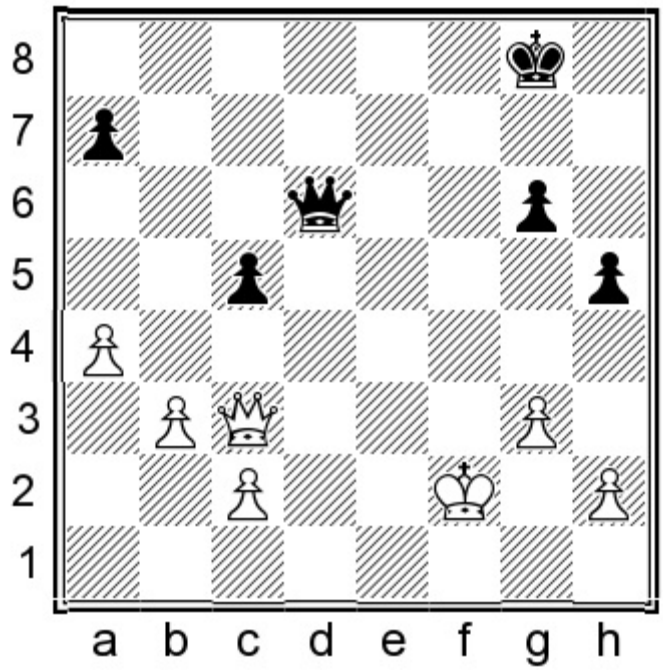
71...♕h4+!

And White resigned: 72.♔d1 ♕h1+ 73.♔d2 ♕g2+ 74.♔c1 ♕g1+ 75.♔d2 ♕f2+ 76.♔c1 ♕e1#.

0–1

EXERCISE 52
Grivas Efstratios
Bousios Hristos
A44 Rhodes 1993

35...h5



EVALUATION

I have won a pawn and I have the upper hand in the ending that has arisen. My advantage is based not only on the extra pawn but also on the weaknesses in Black's queenside pawn structure. The question is how can I convert my advantage in the most secure way?

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

In queen endings the need of a passed pawn is of a highly importance So, I need to prepare one on the queenside by **36.♕c4+ ♔g7 37.c3**, followed by b4. My king will also advance to the queenside, assisting he passed-to-be pawn.

PLAN B

No need to hurry in my decisions. Good is to fix the kingside pawns and try to centralise both my pieces. This is best done by **36.h4 ♔f7 37.♕e3 ♔g7 38.♔e2**.

PLAN C

A good plan should be the invasion of my king on the queenside, attacking the enemy pawns. Moreover, in that wing my king would be excellently protected from checks. So, I should opt for **36.♕d3 ♕f6+ 37.♔e2 ♔h7 38.h4 ♕e7+ 39.♔d2 ♕c7 40.♔c3**, when I am already in the very right track.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 52

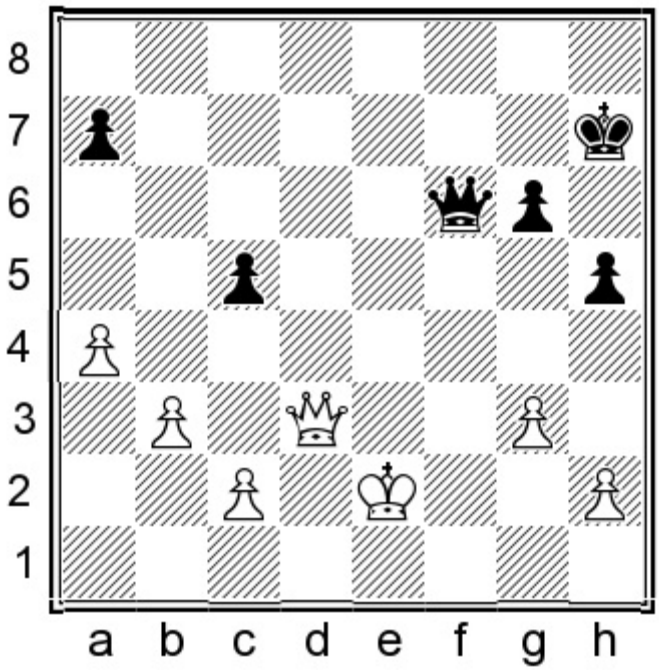
Plan A is not satisfactory, as Black gets quite a good activity by **37...♕d2+**.

Plan B is quite playable but sooner or later will have to turn to Plan C.

Plan C is the best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
5	**40**	**50**

36.♕d3 ♕f6+ 37.♔e2 ♔h7



38.h4!

Securing the white kingside pawns. Since the queen simultaneously protects the two bases of White's pawn structure (c2 and g3) Black lacks counterplay.

38...♕e7+ 39.♔d2 ♕c7 40.♔c3 ♕f7 41.♕d6! a5 42.♕e5

Possible was the immediate 42.♕xc5 ♕f3+ 43.♔b2 ♕xg3 44.♕xa5 ♕xh4 45.♕e5+–, but White wanted to 'test' Black a little bit. The white queen occupies a powerful post, depriving Black of vital squares.

42...♕b7 43.♕xc5 ♕f3+ 44.♔c4?!

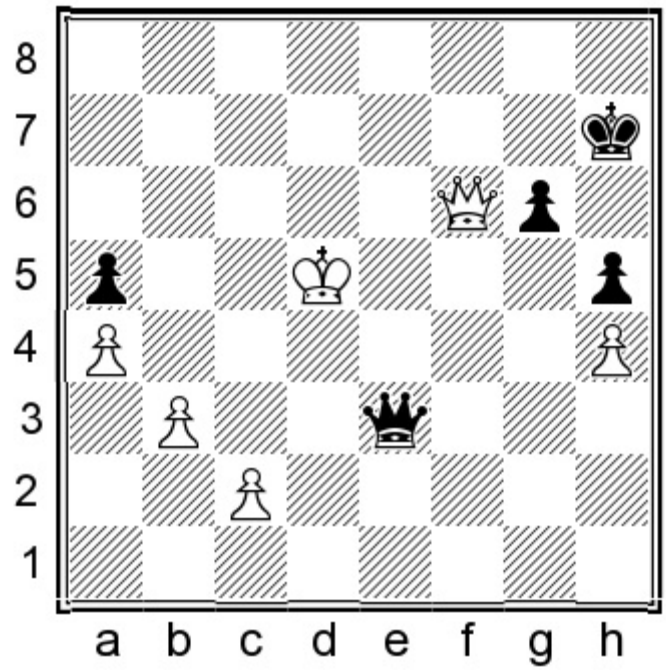
44.♔b2, was accurate.

44...♕e2+

In order to avoid 44...♕xg3 45.♕e7+ ♔h6 46.♕f6, when the white king is too near to the black a-pawn.

45.♔d5 ♕f3+ 46.♔e6 ♕xg3 47.♕e7+ ♔h6 48.♕f6! ♕e3+ 49.♔d5 ♔h7

Of course not 49...♕d2+ 50.♕d4! ♕xc2? 51.♕h8#.



50.c3! ♕a7 51.♔c4 ♕c7+ 52.♔b5 ♕b7+ 53.♔xa5 ♕xb3 54.♕e7+ ♔h6 55.♕c5

White now practically has two extra pawns, as Black is unable to mobilise his kingside pawns.

55...♕b8 56.♕g5+ ♔h7 57.♕e7+ ♔h6 58.c4

Not the most accurate, but anyway White should win.

58...♕b3?!

58...♕a8+, offered better chances to survive: 59.♔b4 ♕b8+ 60.♔c3 ♕g3+ 61.♔c2 ♕g2+ 62.♔d3 ♕b2 63.♕e1!±.

59.♕g5+ ♔h7 60.♕e7+ ♔h6 61.♕f8+! ♔h7 62.♕f7+ ♔h6 63.♕f6! ♔h7 64.c5

No checks for Black, while the white c-pawn marches.

64...♕d5 65.♕d6 ♕a8+ 66.♔b5 ♕b7+ 67.♕b6 ♕d5 68.a5

The white pawns are on a one-horse race, while Black is unable to react.

68...♕d3+ 69.♔c6 ♕e4+ 70.♔c7 ♕xh4

The white h-pawn is unimportant at this stage; important is how far advanced are each side's pawns. The end was:

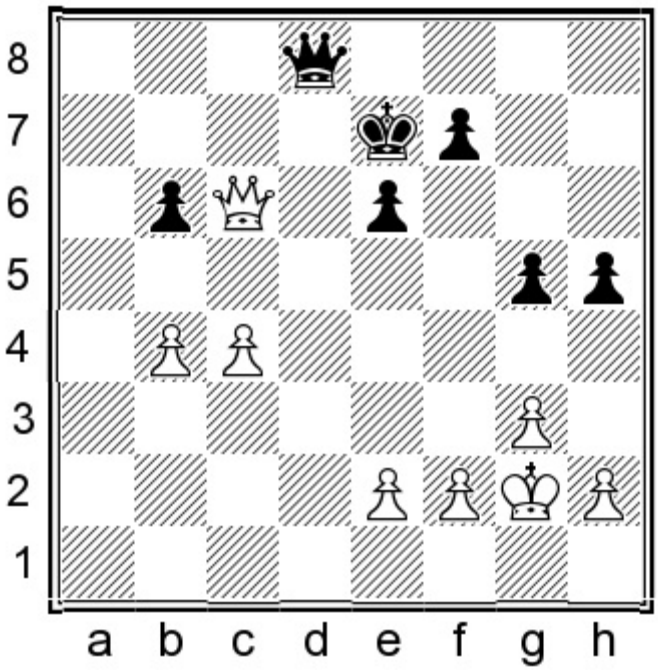
71.c6 ♕e7+ 72.♔b8 ♕e8+ 73.♔b7 ♕e7+ 74.c7 h4 75.♔b8 ♕e5 76.a6 h3 77.♕b7 h2 78.♔a8! ♔h6

79.c8=♕ ♔g5

1–0

EXERCISE 53
Grivas Efstratios
Fish Gennadij
E15 Iraklion 1995

24...h5



EVALUATION

I have won a healthy pawn and it seems that it is a matter of time to cash the point. I only have to be careful not to allow any perpetual check, controlling any potential black counterplay.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

An extra pawn should be turned into a passed one and then pushed to the queening square as quickly as it is possible! No exception here, so I should opt for **25.c5 bxc5 26.♕xc5+**. This is better than **26.bxc5**, as the more distant the passed pawn is the better for its possessor. Then the passed b-pawn will be pushed further.

PLAN B

Exchanging queens is a fine option here, if of course Black is helpful! My idea is to push my both pawns to e5 and c5 and then exchange queens by ♕d6+. I will start by **25.e4 g4 26.e5**, when I am ready for c5 and ♕d6+.

PLAN C

Advancing my queenside pawns to get a passed pawn is of course my primary thought, but before I do so I feel that I should play some prophylactic moves around my king's 'nest'. I think that good is **25.h3 ♕d4 26.e3 ♕d3** and only now **27.c5**.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 53

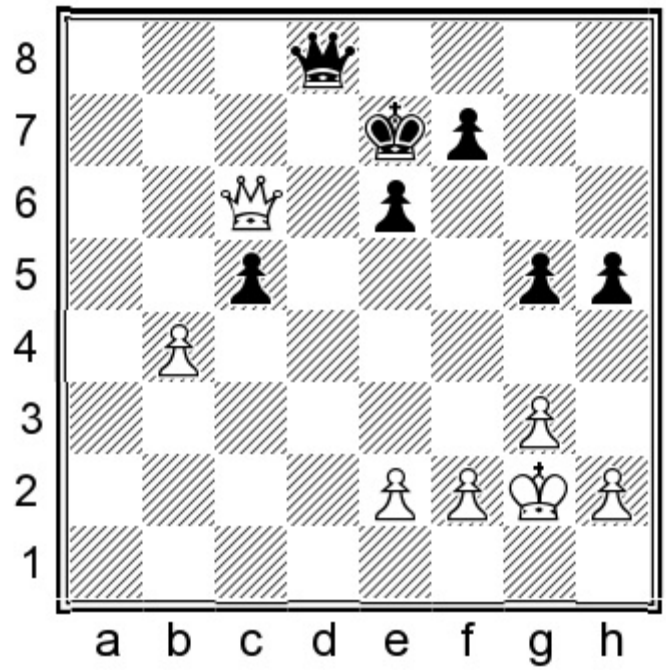
Plan A is the best — see the game.

Plan B is not working, as Black can play **25...♕d4!**, with good counterplay.

Plan C is playable as well, but there is no need for prophylactic moves here.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**0**	**45**

25.c5 bxc5



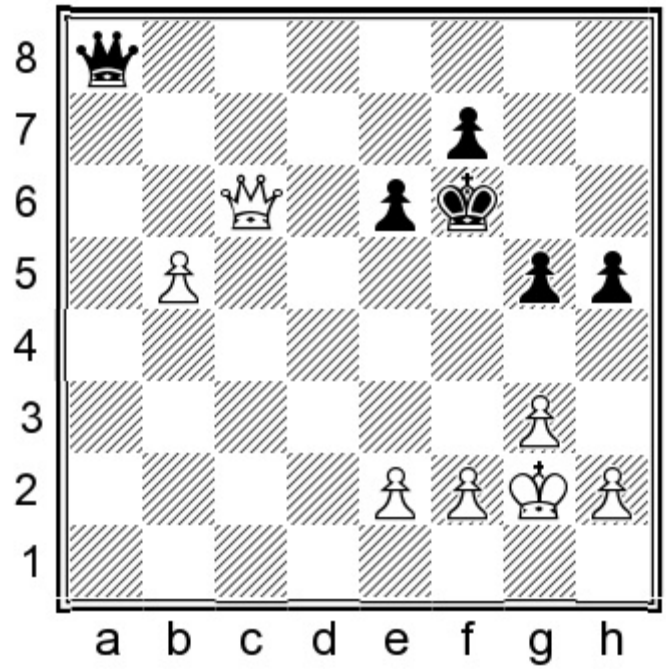
26.♕xc5+!

The more distant the passed pawn is the better for its possessor.

26...♔f6 27.♕c3+

Good as well is 27.f4 gxf4 28.gxf4 ♕a8+ (28...♔g6 29.♕g5+ ♕xg5+ 30.fxg5+–) 29.♔f2 ♔g7 30.♕e5+ ♔g8 31.b5+–.

27...♔e7 28.♕c5+ ♔f6 29.b5 ♕a8+ 30.♕c6!



30...♕a2

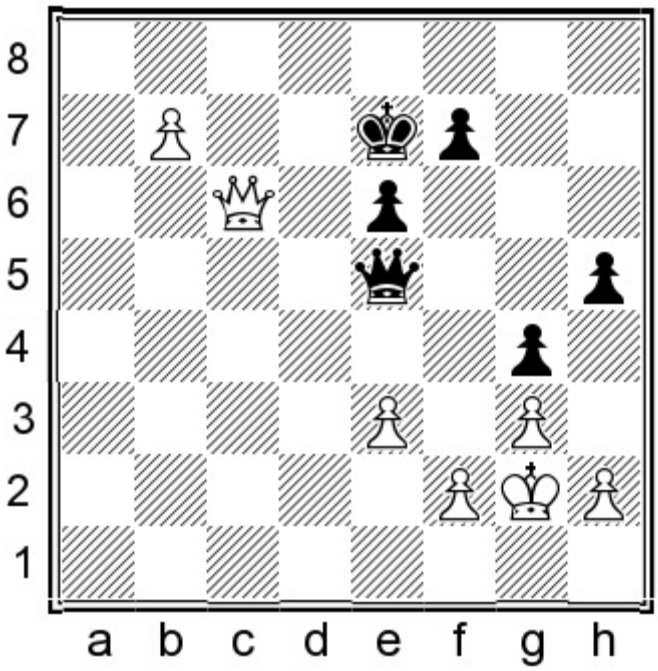
The pawn ending resulting from 30...♕xc6+ 31.bxc6 ♔e7 32.♔f3 ♔d6 (32...f5 33.e4! ♔d6 34.exf5 exf5 35.h4+–) 33.g4! h4 (33...hxg4+ 34.♔xg4 f6 35.f4+–) 34.♔e4 ♔xc6 (34...f6 35.f4 ♔xc6 [35...gxf4

36.♔xf4 ♔xc6 37.g5+–] 36.fxg5 fxg5 37.♔e5 ♔d7 38.♔f6+–) 35.♔e5, is won for White, but avoiding the queen exchange does not help. White has achieved the ideal placement of his queen on the long diagonal, from where it simultaneously protects her king and shepherds the pawn to promotion.

31.b6 g4

Or 31...♕xe2? 32.♕f3+!+–.

32.♕b5! ♕a8+ 33.b7 ♕b8 34.♕c6 ♕e5 35.e3 ♔e7



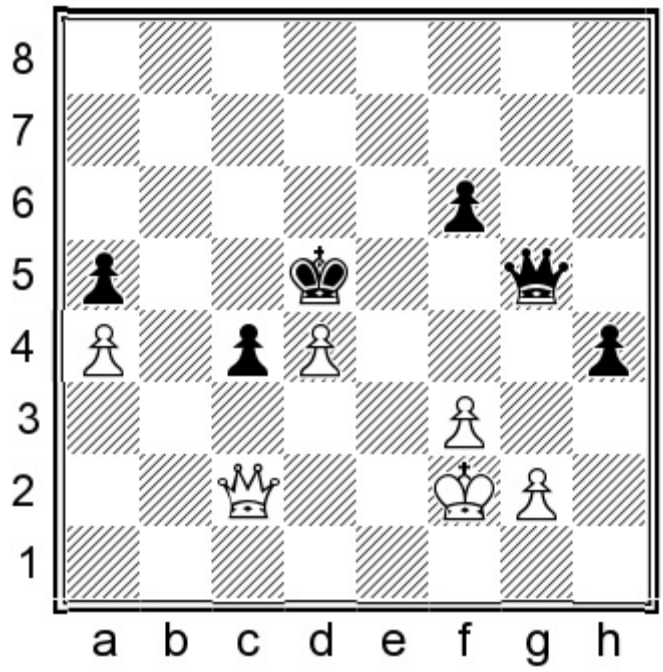
36.h4!

Making space for the king, so as to relieve the queen from one of its duties. Black's situation is now hopeless and the end was:

36...♔f6 37.♕c4 ♔g6 38.♕b4 ♕b8 39.♔h2 1–0

EXERCISE 54
Grivas Efstratios
Kovacevic Vlatko
D38 Iraklion 1985

50...♔d5



EVALUATION

I do not seem to be in any real danger, but Black's chances are however somewhat annoying, thanks to his powerfully centralised king and his active queen. I should always look for counterplay and for perpetual check to secure the half point.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

My d-pawn is under attack and I feel that the best way to protect it, while I will create my own threats simultaneously, is by **51.♕c3**. My opponent can go for **51...f5 52.♕xa5+** (**52.♔f1?! ♕d8! 53.f4 ♕c7 54.♔e2! ♕xf4 55.♕xa5+ ♔e4=+**) **52...♔xd4 53.♕b6+ ♔c3 54.a5**, with an equal game.

PLAN B

My d4-pawn needs protection and I have no time to lose, as Black will get the initiative. I will opt for the natural **51.♕e4+**, when after **51...♔d6 52.♕c2 ♕g3+ 53.♔e3**, I would have an even game.

PLAN C

Protecting my d4-pawn is an obligation, but there are other important squares to be protected as well, especially in my 1st rank, so I think that I will have to opt for **51.♕d1**, when I have successfully defended.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 54

Plan A is the best — the analysis is correct.

Plan B is a bad one and it is near to losing — see the game.

Plan C is a bad one as well and it is losing after **51...♕g3+ 52.♔f1 h3!**.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**0**	**0**

51.♕e4+? ♔d6 52.♕c2 ♕g3+ 53.♔e3

53.♔f1 h3! 54.gxh3 ♕xh3+ 55.♔e1 ♕h4+, is an easy win for Black.

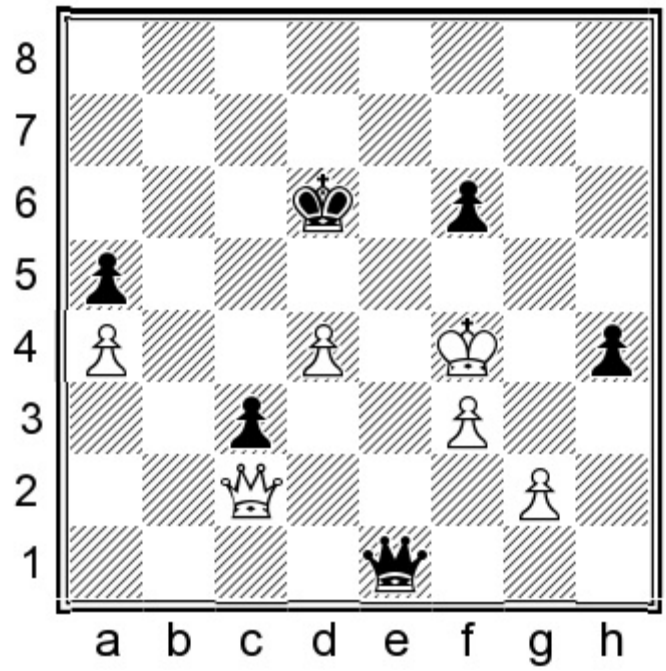
53...♕e1+!

This is what White missed...

54.♔f4

54.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 55.♔xe2 ♔d5 56.♔e3 f5 57.f4 c3 58.♔d3 c2 59.♔xc2 ♔xd4–+.

54...c3



Things now look critical for White, who is only counting on the exposure of the black king and the

possibility of perpetual check.

55.♕b3 ♕g3+ 56.♔e4 ♕g6+?!

It was time for Black to collect the point with 56...c2!.

57.♔e3 c2?

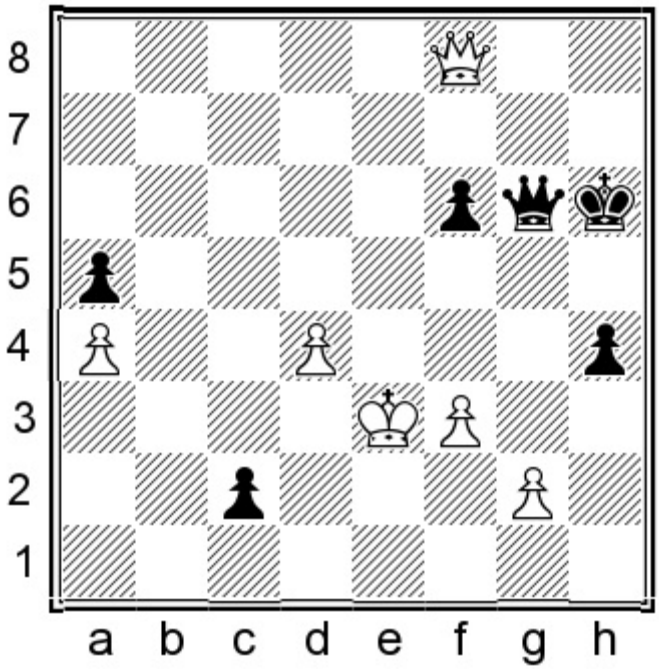
Wrong timing!

Black could win with 57...♕g5+! 58.♔d3 ♕d2+ 59.♔e4 f5+! 60.♔xf5 ♕xd4.

58.♕b8+

And White succeeds in obtaining perpetual check.

58...♔e7 59.♕c7+ ♔f8 60.♕d8+ ♔g7 61.♕e7+ ♔h6 62.♕f8+



62...♔h5?!

Overreacting! Black had to accept the draw.

63.♕h8+ ♔g5

Going into the pawn ending with 63...♕h6+? 64.♕xh6+ ♔xh6 65.♔d2, was hardly an option for Black!

64.f4+?!

Leads to a draw, but 64.♔d2!, would even give White some small winning chances!

64...♔g4 65.♕c8+ ♕f5

Certainly not 65...♔g3?? 66.♕h3#!

66.♕g8+ ♕g5!? 67.♕c8+

67.fxg5 c1=♕+ 68.♔d3 fxg5 69.♕e6+=.

67...♕f5 68.♕g8+ ½-½

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QUEEN & ROOK POWER

There are many games where all the minor pieces get traded off, while most pawns and most of the major (heavy) pieces are still on the board.

These are quite interesting cases, as contrary to the minor pieces ‘concept’ here the kings do not usually play an important role, as it is quite dangerous for them to get involved into the battle.

Thus, pawn weaknesses are playing an important role here, as passivity and lack of economy (it is better to protect them by pawns or minor/light pieces) can be disastrous.

The same applies for a passed pawn — here it becomes more powerful, as the heavy pieces cannot really satisfactory blockade it.

Common targets, fierce attacks, pieces cooperation, etc, are important factors here and shouldn’t be underestimated.

UNBALANCES

Another interesting chapter is the unbalance of queen vs two rooks (with pawns) endgame. Some tips will be helpful:

SOS Tip 1 — Queen vs Two Rooks

1. In general, a queen and one pawn equal two rooks. This is of course the simplistic way to be examined, as its misunderstanding will eventually guide us to nearly always prefer the two rooks.
2. Thus, in a situation with an equal number of pawns and no particular structural weaknesses for either side, the side with the rooks usually has the upper hand.
3. In general, it is not an easy job to say when the two rooks are better than a queen; it all depends on the strategical factors of each exact position. The two rooks might offer a serious advantage and high chances of getting the full point, if they exploit their positive assets.
4. The queen should avoid passive positions or if this is not possible, then should avoid such kind of ending at all! The queen has the upper hand when the rooks are disconnected or doomed to passivity because of the need to stop an opponent’s passed pawns or to defend their own pawns.

The queen can be in full control when:

SOS Tip 2 — Queen Domination

1. The side with the queen will be stronger when the player with the two rooks has a lot of weak pawns and/or squares. Yet, the balance in a queen versus two rooks situation depends a lot on the position.
2. Thus, a rule of thumb is to prefer the queen when it has a lot of weak squares and pawns to

attack. Remember that things are not always that bleak for the queen! Such a strong piece must have her glorious moments as well.

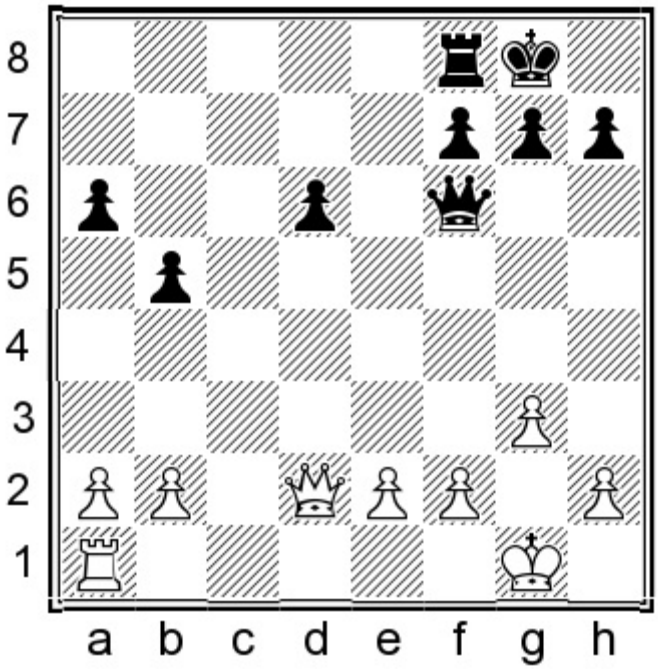
Rooks can be powerful when act together. A standard method is doubling the rooks to gain, or at least stop, an enemy's pawn. Rooks can also create mating threats, particularly when the opponent's king is cut off at an edge. The most important factors that usually are in favour of the rooks are:

SOS Tip 3 — Rooks Domination

1. The rooks have full control of the position.
2. The king is safe.
3. The rooks support a passed pawn.
4. There are fixed pawn structures.
5. The rooks have safe anchor squares.
6. The queen has no real targets.
7. The queen must passively protect weak pawns.

EXERCISE 55
Dominguez Perez Leinier
Moradiabadi Elshan
A13 Khanty-Mansiysk 2011

21...♕f6



EVALUATION

So, a typical position with an isolated and backward pawn appeared on the board. But here my opponent's minuses are many. His queenside pawns are also weak and there are no minor pieces on the board to help on defending properly the d6-pawn. As it is well-known, the side with the isolated pawn

should seek for heavy pieces exchanges, if necessary, and avoid the minor ones. Here unfortunately the opposite has happened, so Black's position is critical.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I feel that my rook should be placed on the only open file by **22.♖c1**. Black will have to go for **22...d5** (forced, as **22...♖d8**, would allow **23.♖c6**, winning a pawn), but then the d-pawn from backward becomes a purely isolated and this is even 'worst'. At least on d6 it would be more difficult to be attacked efficiently and could even be protected by his king if needed. Now I can prepare the well-known method of attack with rook(s) in front of the queen and the advance of my e-pawn to e4: **23.♖c3 ♖d8 24.♖d3**, with a significant advantage.

PLAN B

The typical way is to apply pressure on the weak black d-pawn, so good must be to go for **22.♖d1 d5 23.e3 ♖d8** and then strength my position. Certainly I should avoid **24.♕d4 ♕xd4 25.♖xd4 ♔f8**, when Black is fine.

PLAN C

Black's queenside is rather weak as well and I should take advantage of it, as I cannot win just with one weakness (the d5-pawn). So, I will opt for **22.a4 h5** (looking for counterplay. **22...♖e8 23.axb5 axb5 24.♖a6 ♖d8 25.♕a5**, looks great) **23.axb5 axb5 24.♖a6 ♖d8 25.♕a5 h4 26.♕xb5 h3**, where I have won a healthy pawn.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 55

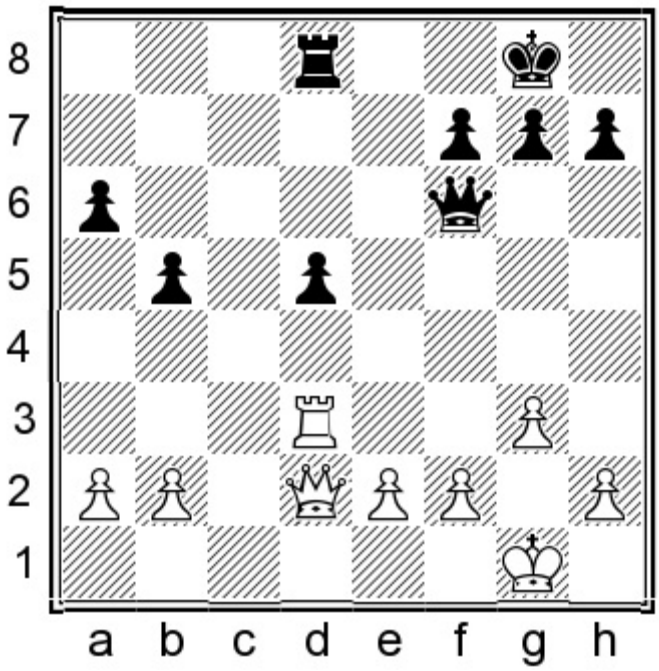
Plan A is best — see the game.

Plan B is not bad, but worst than the other two plans.

Plan C is fine, but Black obviously has obtained unnecessary counterplay.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**25**	**40**

22.♖c1! d5 23.♖c3! ♖d8 24.♖d3



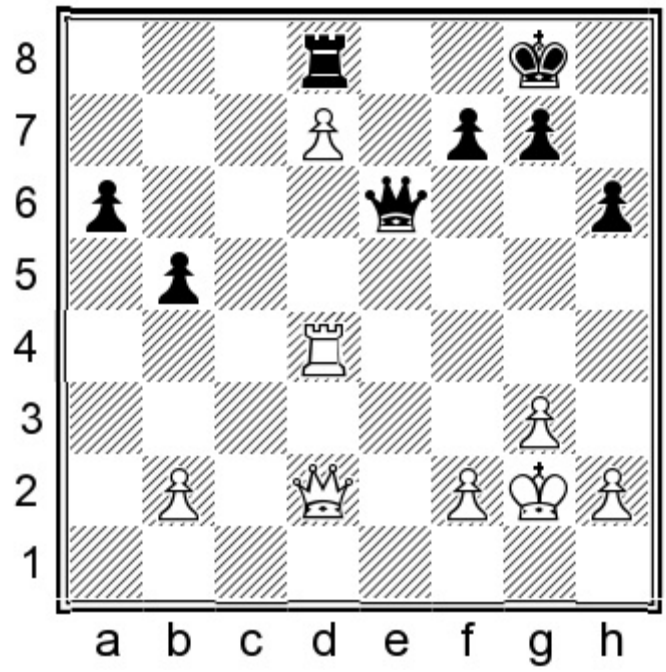
24...h6?!

Black should try 24...♕g6! 25.a3 (25.♖xd5? ♕b1+ 26.♔g2 ♕e4+–+) 25...h6 26.e3 (26.♖d4? ♖c8! 27.♖xd5 ♖c2=) 26...♕e6 (26...♖c8 27.♖xd5 ♖c2 28.♕d4±) 27.♖d4 f5!. Black's last move is forced in order to stop White's e4 (winning a pawn), but now his pawn structure is really very weak, as pawns a6, d5 and f5 have become targets. White holds a clear advantage after 28.♕c2 and by moves as ♔g2, h4-h5 and entering the c-file, he will have over 75% chances to win.

25.♖d4! ♕g6 26.e4!

White rightly exchanges his a-pawn with a strong passed d-pawn. He could also go for the previous notes' variation with 26.a3, but this is a good one as well. For a top-GM this are all as natural as a baby's cry... They know, they apply correctly and they accurately calculate when need to.

26...♖c8 27.exd5 ♕b1+ 28.♔g2 ♕xa2 29.d6 ♕e6 30.d7 ♖d8



31.b4!

Fixing the black queenside pawns, not allowing Black to create his own passed pawn due to his (previous) majority! Also it secures the c5-square for future use by the white queen. 31.♕c3 ♕e7 32.b4, is also good.

31...♕e5

Not of a help is 31...♕c6+ 32.♔g1 ♔f8 33.♖d6 ♕c7 34.♕d4±.

32.♕c3 ♔h7 33.♕c5! ♕e6

33...f6 34.♕xe5 fxe5 35.♖d6 ♔g8 36.♔f3 ♔f7 37.♔e4 ♔e7 38.♔xe5 ♖xd7 39.♖xd7+ ♔xd7 40.♔d5, wins the pawn ending, as due to the fixed black queenside White is actually a pawn-up!

34.♕c7 ♕e7 35.h4!

Such positions cannot be won only due to the passed pawn; this is usually the 'decoy'! Other ways as attack on the king or/and attack on other weaknesses should be called for. A combination of all these assets is what brings victory in the end.

35...g6

35...h5?!, loses by 36.♕c5! ♕xc5 (36...♖xd7 37.♕f5+; 36...♕e6 37.♕xh5+ ♔g8 38.♕c5) 37.bxc5+–. 35...♔g8, at first sight seems to hold longer, but White can win with some really nice zugzwangs: 36.h5 ♔h8 (36...f6 37.♕c6 ♔f7 38.♕c8 ♔f8 39.♕xa6) 37.♕c8 ♔h7 (37...♔g8?! 38.♕xa6+–) 38.♕c5 ♕e6 39.♕c7 ♕e7 40.♕c8 ♕g5 41.♕c5 ♕f6 42.♕c2+ ♔g8 43.♖e4+–.

36.h5! gxh5

36...g5, targets the h6- & a6-pawns: 37.♕c5 ♕e6 38.♖d6+–.

37.♕f4?!

37.♕c5! ♕f6 38.♖d6 ♕g5 39.♕d4 h4 (39...♕f5 40.♕d2 ♕g5 41.♕d3+ ♔g7 42.♕d4+ ♔h7 43.♖xa6+–)

40.♕xh4 ♕xh4 41.gxh4, seems to be the accurate win.

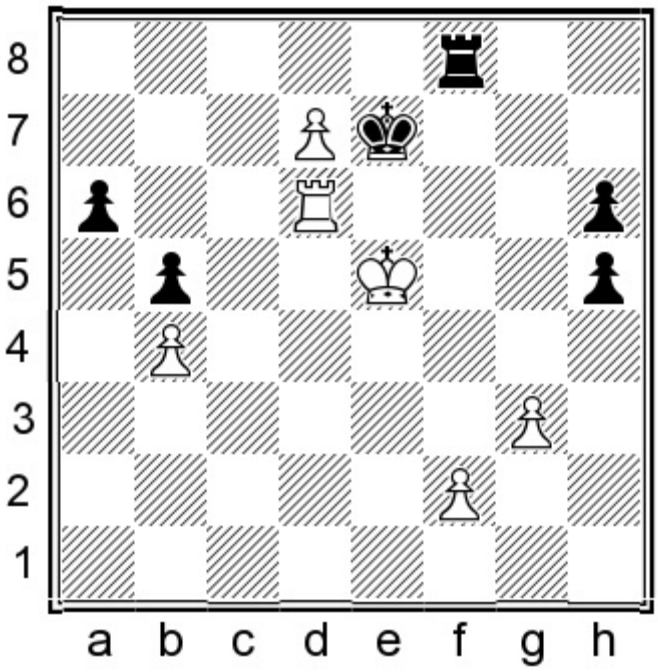
37...♔g7 38.♖d6 f6!

Black finds a stubborn defence. Easy would be 38...♕g5?! 39.♕d4+ ♔g8 40.♖xa6+–.

39.♕d4 ♕e5?!

Black cracks under pressure and time-trouble, as usual in such passive positions. 39...♕f7!, lasts longer and should be preferred, as White would have to find some delicate manoeuvres with the help of his last piece to enter the battle; his king: 40.♔h2 ♕e7 41.♔h3 ♕f7 42.♔g2 (now it is Black to move — White 'lost' a tempo with his last triangulation) 42...♕e7 43.♕d3 ♕f7 44.♔h3 ♕e7 45.♔h4! ♕f7 46.f4 ♕g6 47.♕e2 ♕f5 48.♕xh5±.

40.♕xe5 fxe5 41.♔f3 ♔f7 42.♔e4 ♔e7 43.♔xe5 ♖f8



44.d8=♕+!

Of course 44.f4 ♔d8 45.f5, was enough to win, but the text is clearer.

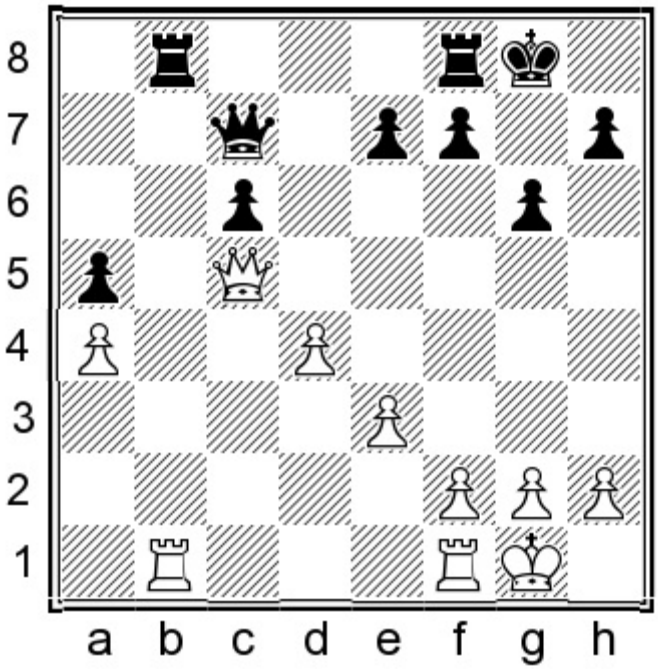
44...♖xd8 45.♖xd8 ♔xd8 46.f4 ♔e7 47.f5

And White wins the pawn ending with a pawn-down (!!), as the black pawns are either fixed (queenside) or doubled (kingside).

1–0

EXERCISE 56
Kasimdzhanov Rustam
Vallejo Pons Francisco
D80 Wijk aan Zee 2009

24...♕c7



EVALUATION

My opponent remained with a weak backward c-pawn, located on a semi-open file and without any counterplay; a nightmare for every serious player. This weakness in his pawn structure is serious and condemns him into passivity, above all. But how to benefit from it?

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Adding pressure on the weak pawn should be my priority and this can be best done by **25.♖b5**. The first rook appears on b5, forcing Black to abandon the b-file in order to cover his a-pawn. My advantage is increasing and Black's potentional counterplay is nil after **25...♖a8 26.♕c3** (making room for the tripling of the major pieces along the c-file, targeting the backward pawn) **26...♖fc8 27.♖c5 e6 28.♖c1**, when I have tied my opponent down to passive defence of both of his a- and c-pawns.

PLAN B

My opponent is threatening to play **25...♖xb1 26.♖xb1 ♖b8**, taking advantage of the back-rank mate after **27.♖xb8+ ♕xb8 28.♕xc6? ♕b1+**. The typical way to apply pressure is to think of the rule of the two weaknesses. So, I must find a second front, namely the kingside and the black king.

Good seems to be **25.h4**, when my idea of h5-h6, as avoiding back-rank mates, seems logical and good.

PLAN C

I haven't much to expect from the b-file, so good seems to be **25.♖bc1 ♖b4 26.d5 ♖xa4 27.dxc6**, when my passed c-pawn is far more advanced and dangerous than the a one, giving me a strong advantage.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 56

Plan A is best — see the game.

Plan B is playable but not as strong as Plan A.

Plan C is not much, as after **27...♖d8 28.♖fd1 ♖xd1+ 29.♖xd1 ♖b4! 30.h3 ♖b6**, Black can defend.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**35**	**15**

25.♖b5!

The first rook appears on b5, forcing Black to abandon the b-file in order to cover his a-pawn. White's advantage is increasing and Black's potentional counterplay is nil.

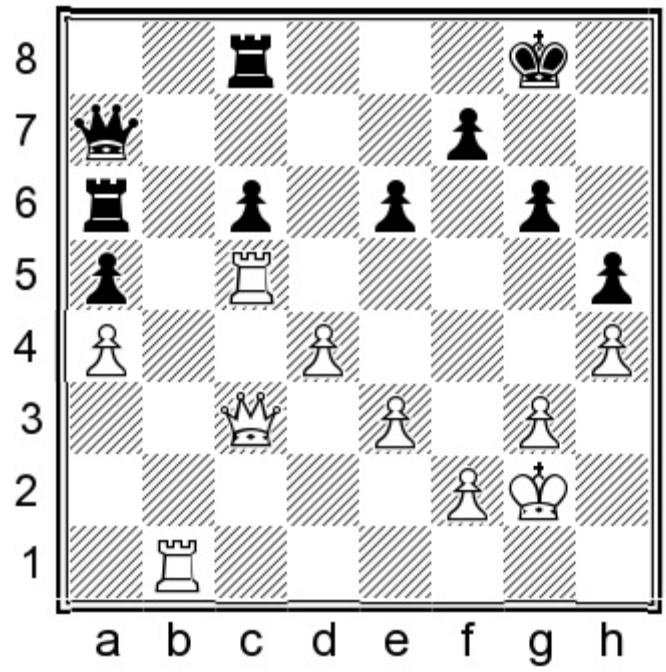
25...♖a8 26.♕c3

Making room for the tripling of the major pieces along the c-file, targeting the backward pawn.

26...♖fc8 27.♖c5 e6 28.♖c1 ♖a6 29.h4 h5

It would be 'awful' to allow a white pawn on h6: 29...♕d8 30.h5 ♕c7 31.h6 ♕d6 32.d5+–.

30.♖b1 ♖aa8 31.g3 ♖a6 32.♔g2 ♕a7



33.♖bb5!

And now the second rook! One of the weak pawns will be now lost.

33...♔h7

33...cxb5 34.♖xc8+ ♔h7 35.d5+–.

34.♖xa5 ♖xa5 35.♖xa5

35.♕xa5 ♕xa5 36.♖xa5, would also do the job.

35...♕b7 36.♖c5 ♕b1 37.♕c2!

Avoiding any nasty ideas along the h1-a8 diagonal and forcing matters.

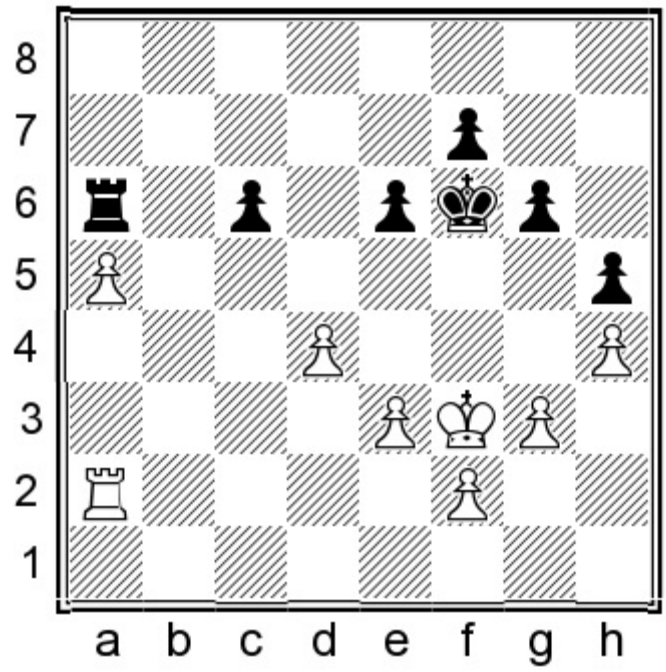
37...♕xc2

37...♕b4 38.♖xh5+ ♔g7 39.♖c5, was just another one pawn plus for White.

38.♖xc2 ♖a8 39.♖a2

Rooks belong behind passed pawns! The end was:

39...♔g7 40.a5 ♖a6 41.♔f3 ♔f6



42.♔f4 ♔e7 43.♔g5 e5

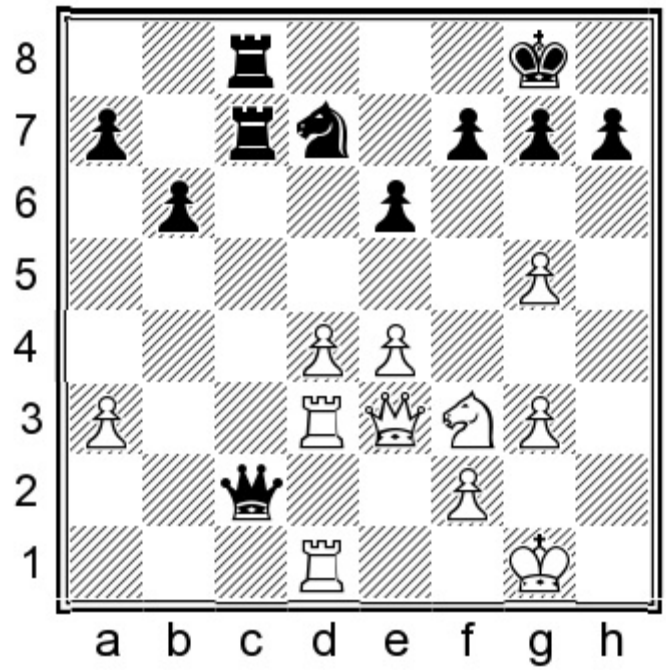
43...♔d7 44.♔f6 ♔e8 45.e4 ♔f8 46.♖b2.

44.dxe5 c5 45.♔f4 c4 46.♔e4

1–0

EXERCISE 57
Chiburdanidze Maia
Maric Alisa
E12 Dresden 2008

21...♖fc8



EVALUATION

A difficult position to asses properly. My centre is better and my pieces are ready for the thematic d5 advance, but my opponent has already found pleasant counterplay down the c-file and the queenside in general.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Passed pawns do not need light pieces, so before I would go for the d5 advance, I should exchange the knights by **22.♘e5**, so Black cannot blockade it. I think that Black should opt for **22...♘xe5** (**22...♕b2 23.♘xd7 ♖xd7 24.d5**, looks great for me) **23.dxe5 ♖f8** (**23...g6 24.♔g2 ♖f8 25.♕f4±**) **24.♔g2 ♖c4 25.♕f3±**.

PLAN B

It is not yet time to push or exchange anything. I should firstly improve my position further and this can be done by **22.♖1d2 ♕b1+ 23.♔g2 ♖c1 24.♖b3 ♕a1 25.♕e2**, where I am in full control.

PLAN C

The advance d5 is crying to be played and in this kind of positions I do not have a better plan! So, I will go for **22.d5 e5** (**22...exd5 23.exd5 ♖c3 24.♖1d2 ♕c1+ 25.♔g2**, is quite pleasant for me) **23.♔g2 ♖c3**, with an unclear position.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 57

Plan A is best — see the game.

Plan B is unclear, as Black has his trumps too.

Plan C is the second best and the analysis is accurate.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**30**	**40**

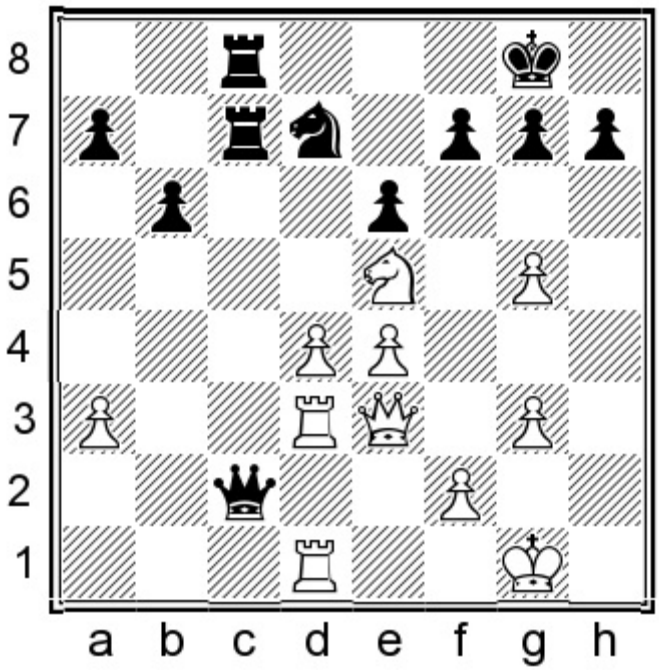
22.♘e5!

White is cleverly seeking the exchange of the last black minor piece (the blockading one) before advance her — passed to be — d-pawn.

22.♔g2;

22.♖1d2 ♕b1+ 23.♔g2 ♖c1 24.♖b3 ♕a1 25.♕e2 ♖h1

22.♘e5!



22...♕b2?!

Although not appealing, Black had to go for 22...♘xe5 23.dxe5 ♖f8 (23...g6 24.♔g2 ♖f8 25.♕f4±) 24.♔g2 ♖c4 25.♕f3±.

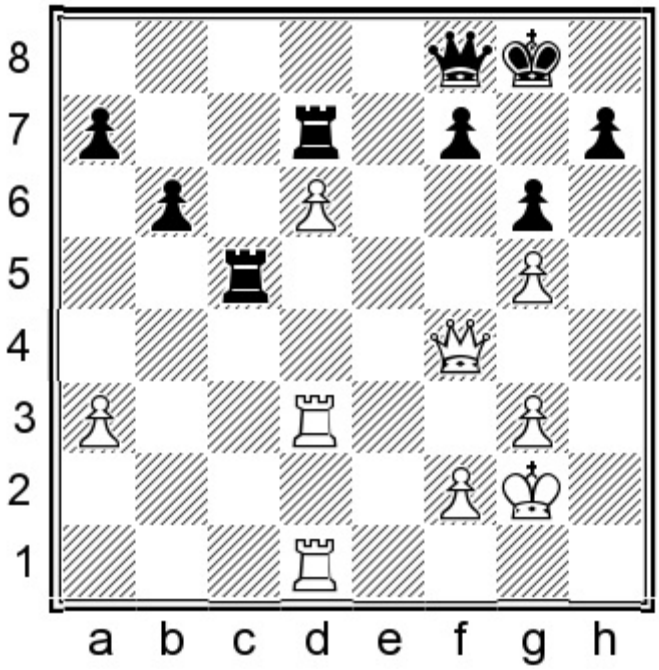
23.♘xd7 ♖xd7 24.d5!

Now Black is in trouble.

24...exd5 25.exd5

Exchanging one pair of rooks with 25.♖xd5 ♖xd5 26.exd5, looks preferable, as Black would have less forces to defend.

25...g6 26.♔g2 ♕g7 27.♕f4 ♕f8 28.d6 ♖c5

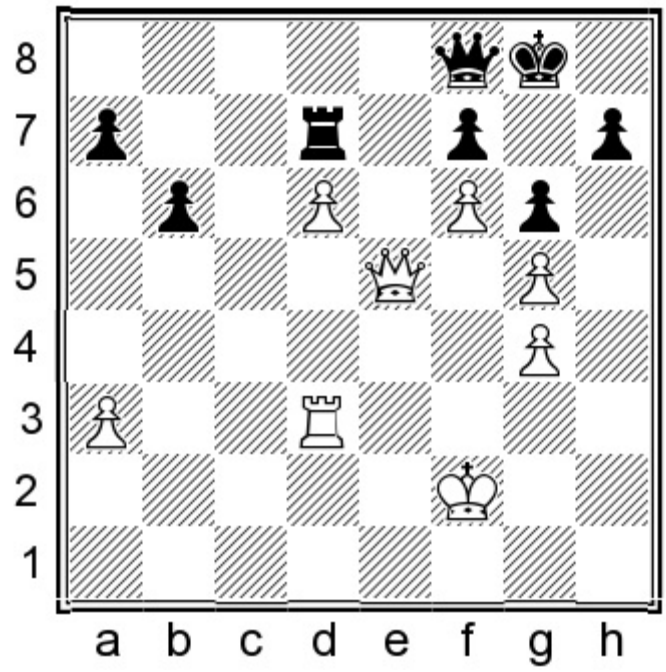


Now White must find some other targets as well, as the d-pawn will not queen easily — the Rule of the Two Weaknesses.

29.g4! ♕d8 30.♖d5 ♖xd5

30...♖c6, looks preferable — it was explained why.

31.♖xd5 ♕e8 32.♕d4 ♕f8 33.♕e5 ♕c8 34.♔g3 ♕f8 35.♕f6 ♕b8 36.f3 ♕f8 37.f4 ♕b8 38.♖d3 ♕e8 39.♔f2 ♕b8 40.♕e5 ♕f8 41.f5 ♕d8 42.f6 ♕f8?!



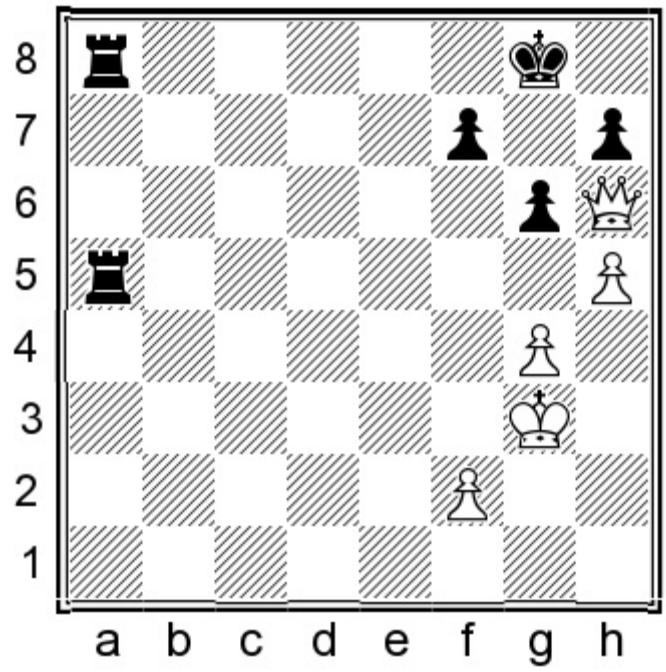
43.♕e7! ♕d8 44.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 45.d7

And as ♖e3-e8 is coming, Black resigned.

1–0

EXERCISE 58
Leko Peter
Kramnik Vladimir
C42 Brissago 2004

43...♖4a5



EVALUATION

This is a typical unbalanced heavy pieces ending, where my opponent has every chance to win. He will have to try to exchange his rooks for my queen and one pawn, achieving a won pawn ending. Easier said than done!

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

The main problem is that I should wait for things to come and have patient, beside my worst position! I should try to put-up a defence by **44.♕f4 g5 45.♕f6 h6 46.f3**, but not **46.♕xh6? ♖8a6**, when the fight is going on.

PLAN B

My primary thought should be to exchange pawns and reduce the material in general. A good way to go for it seems to be by **44.f4 ♖a1** (**44...g5? 45.f5=**) **45.f5 ♖8a3+ 46.♔f4 ♖a4+ 47.♔g5** (**47.♔e3? ♖xg4!–+**) **47...gxf5 48.♕c6 ♖a6** (**48...h6+!? 49.♔xf5 ♔h7∓**) **49.♕c8+ ♔g7 50.♔xf5 ♖f6+ 51.♔e4 ♖e1+ 52.♔d5 ♖fe6∓**, where although worst, I can put-up a fight, as it is highly important to open the opponent king, trying for a perpetual.

PLAN C

Reducing the material on the board is nearly always a good asset for the defended side. So, I should opt for **44.hxg6 hxg6 45.g5** (**45.f3 ♖a3 46.♕d2 ♖b8 47.♕d5 ♖bb3 48.g5 ♖b8** [**48...♖xf3+? 49.♕xf3 ♖xf3+ 50.♔xf3 ♔f8 51.♔e4=**] **49.♕d4**) **45...♖f5 46.f4 ♖a4 47.♕h4**, where I can put a good fight.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 58

Plan A is not that good — see the game.

Plan B is best and White should have tried it.

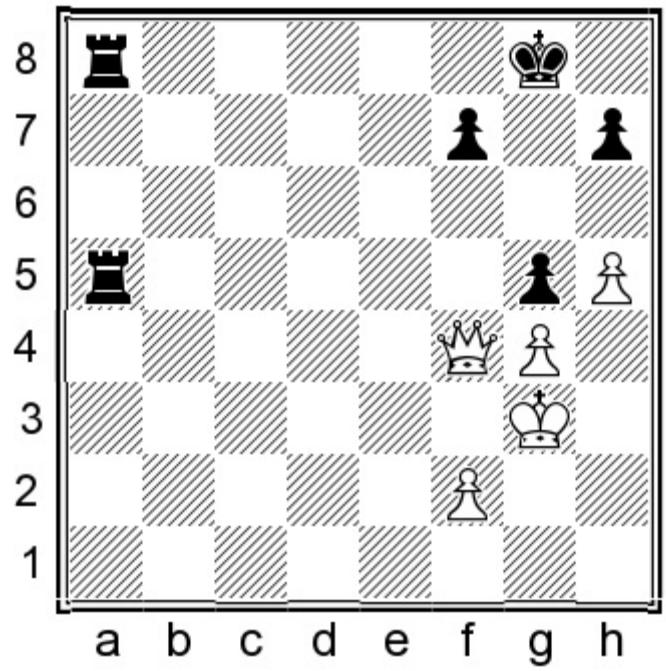
Plan C is the second best and the analysis is accurate.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
20	**50**	**35**

44.♕f4?!

Interesting (but not enough for the half point) is the position after 44.hxg6 hxg6. Now Black can win with some delicate manoeuvres, first shown by endgame expert GM Karsten Muller: 45.g5 (45.f3 ♖a3 46.♕d2 ♖b8 47.♕d5 ♖bb3 48.g5 ♖b8! [48...♖xf3+? 49.♕xf3 ♖xf3+ 50.♔xf3 ♔f8 51.♔e4=] 49.♕d4 ♖a5 would just transpose to 45.g5 themes) 45...♖f5 46.f4 ♖a4 47.♕h4 ♖c4!. The point! Black can use his rooks in order to create mating threats and zugzwang positions, waiting for the right moment to achieve a won pawn ending. Wrong would be 47...♖fxf4? 48.♕xf4 ♖xf4 49.♔xf4 ♔f8 50.♔e4! (50.♔e5? ♔e7–+) 50...♔e8 51.♔d4! ♔d8 52.♔e4=, or 47...♔f8? 48.♕h8+ (48.♔f3? ♖axf4+ 49.♕xf4 ♔e7!–+) 48...♔e7 49.♕b8! ♖axf4 50.♕c7+ ♔f8 51.♕xf4=. Now White can continue with 48.♕g4 (48.♔f3?! ♖c3+ 49.♔e4 ♖b5 50.♔d4 ♖a3 51.♕g4 ♖b4+ 52.♔e5 ♖a5+ 53.♔d6 ♖f5–+) 48...♖c3+ 49.♔g2 (49.♔f2 ♖d3 50.♔e2 ♖b3 51.♔f2 ♔g7 52.♔g2 ♖d5 53.♕e2 ♖dd3 54.♔f1 ♖f3+ 55.♔g1 ♖fe3 56.♕c4 ♖bd3 57.♔f1 ♖d2 58.♕b4 ♖ed3 59.♕e4 ♖a3 60.♕e5+ ♔h7 61.♕f6 ♔g8 62.f5 ♖f3+ 63.♔e1 ♖d5–+; 49.♔h4 ♔h7!–+) 49...♖d5 50.♕e2 ♖dd3 51.♕e8+ ♔g7 52.♕e2 ♔f8! 53.♔f2 (53.♔g1 ♖b3 54.♕f2 ♖e3 55.♔h2 ♔g8 56.♔g2 ♖bd3 57.♔g1 ♖d1+ 58.♔g2 ♖de1–+) 53...♖b3 54.♔g2 ♖g3+ 55.♔f2 ♖h3 56.♕d1 ♖bd3 57.♕c1 ♖h2+ 58.♔g1 ♖a2 59.♕c8+ ♔g7 60.♕c1 ♔h7 61.♕e1 ♖dd2 62.♕f1 ♔g7 63.♔h1 ♖f2, but Black is winning anyway. Well, of course the variations are many and quite difficult to be played over a practical game...

44.♕f4?! g5!



Now Black can keep all pawns on board, without even allowing a future f4 break.

45.♕f6 h6 46.f3

Of course not 46.♕xh6? ♖8a6. Also inadequate is 46.f4 ♖a3+ (46...♖5a6 47.♕e5 ♖a3+ 48.♔f2 ♖b3 49.♕e2 gxf4–+) 47.♔f2 ♖a2+ 48.♔f3 (48.♔f1 ♖c8–+) 48...♖8a3+ 49.♔e4 ♖a4+ 50.♔d3 (50.♔d5 ♖xf4 51.♕xh6 ♖a5+–+) 50...♖2a3+ 51.♔e2 ♖b3–+.

46...♖5a6 47.♕c3 ♖a4 48.♕c6 ♖8a6 49.♕e8+ ♔g7 50.♕b5 ♖4a5 51.♕b4

White must not allow the black rooks to arrive at the important f6 and f4 squares.

51...♖d5 52.♕b3

52.f4 ♖d3+ 53.♔f2 ♖a2+ 54.♔e1 ♖h3 55.♕e4 ♖h1+ 56.♕xh1 ♖a1+–+.

52...♖ad6 53.♕c4 ♖d3! 54.♔f2 ♖a3 55.♕c5

55.f4 ♖d2+ 56.♔e1 ♖h2! 57.♕d4+ ♔g8 58.fxg5 ♖a1+! 59.♕xa1 ♖h1+–+.

55...♖a2+ 56.♔g3 ♖f6 57.♕b4 ♖aa6 58.♔g2

58.♕b2 ♖a4 59.♔g2 ♖af4–+.

58...♖f4 59.♕b2+ ♖af6

Finally the rooks on the correct squares!

60.♕e5

60.♕c3 ♖xf3 61.♕xf3 ♖xf3 62.♔xf3 ♔f6 63.♔e4 ♔e6–+.

60...♖xf3 61.♕a1 ♖f1 62.♕c3

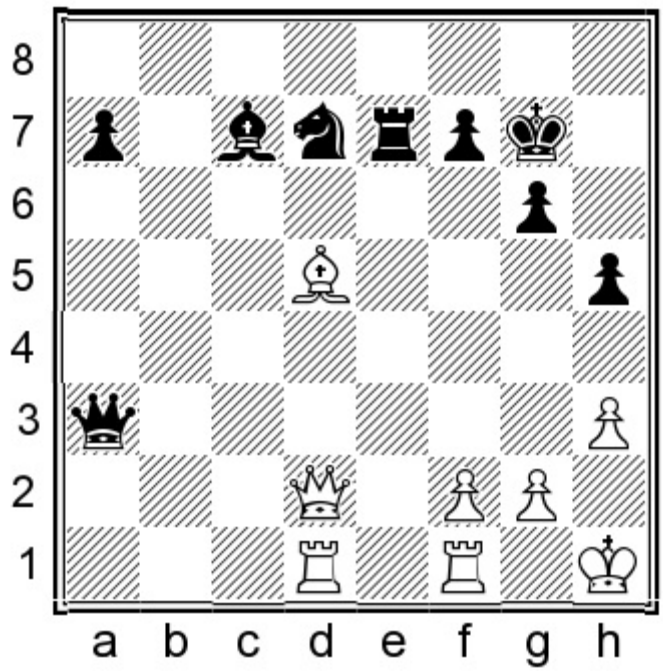
62.♕e5 ♖1f4 63.♔g3 ♔h7 64.♕a1 ♖e6 65.♕b1+ ♖ee4–+.

62...♖1f2+ 63.♔g3 ♖2f3+ 64.♕xf3 ♖xf3+ 65.♔xf3 ♔f6

0–1

EXERCISE 59
Kramnik Vladimir
Svidler Peter
D85 Linares 1999

27...♘d7



EVALUATION

I have won the exchange for a pawn and I am on my way to convert my material superiority. The main question is how to do it, as Black doesn't really have any weak spot to go after, at least for the time being.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Exchanging pieces is a good way to exploit a material advantage and there is no exception here. After **28.♖fe1 ♖xe1+ 29.♕xe1 ♘f6 30.♗f3**, I am on my slowly but surely way, as Black is lacking counterplay and my material will tell.

PLAN B

The feeling is that converting my material into a win is more difficult than it looks. I need to make a lot of exchanges and my opponent will not be willing to assist me! But I think that I have here an interesting continuation with which I can enter a theoretical winning ending with two rooks versus queen: **28.♗xf7 ♖xf7 29.♕xd7 ♖xd7 30.♖xd7+ ♔h6 31.♖xc7**.

PLAN C

I feel that I should try to put pressure on the a7-pawn and for this reason I should preserve both rooks. Good looks **28.♗f3 ♘f6 29.♕d4**, when I am ready for ♖a1 and so on.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 59

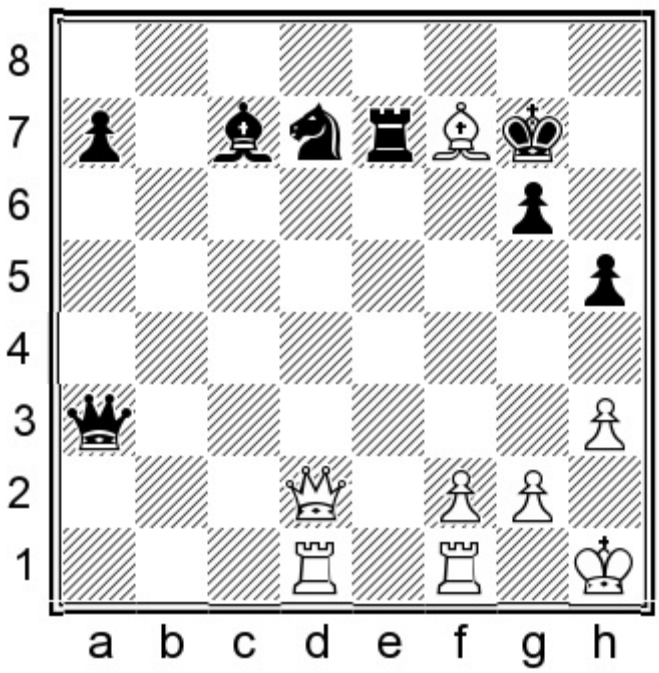
Plan A is not that good, as White will suffer to convert his advantage.

Plan B is the best — see the game.

Plan C is more or less similar to Plan A.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
20	**50**	**20**

28.♗xf7!

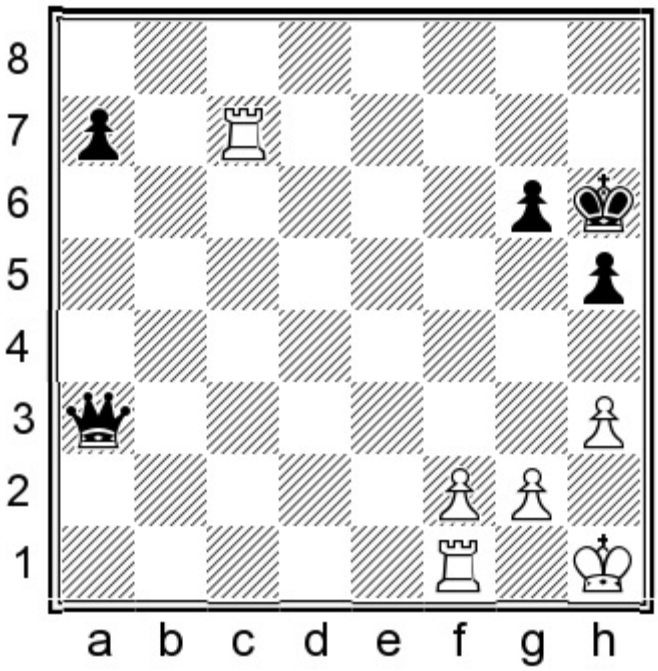


A remarkable but justified decision. White enters a theoretical winning ending with two rooks versus queen.

28...♖xf7

There was not much difference on 28...♔xf7 29.♕xd7 ♖xd7 30.♖xd7+ ♔f6 31.♖xc7 a5 32.♖cc1! a4 (32...♕b4 33.♖a1 and ♖a2, ♖fa1) 33.♖a1 ♕b3 34.♖fb1 ♕c2 35.♔g1 a3 36.♖b6+ ♔g7 37.♖a6+–.

29.♕xd7 ♖xd7 30.♖xd7+ ♔h6 31.♖xc7



31...♕d3?!

Black had to pose more problems with 31...a5 32.♖cc1! a4 33.♖a1 ♕b3, where White had to find 34.f3!! h4 35.♖f2 and ♖fa2, winning.

32.♔g1 ♕d4

32...a5 33.♖a1 a4 34.♖a7.

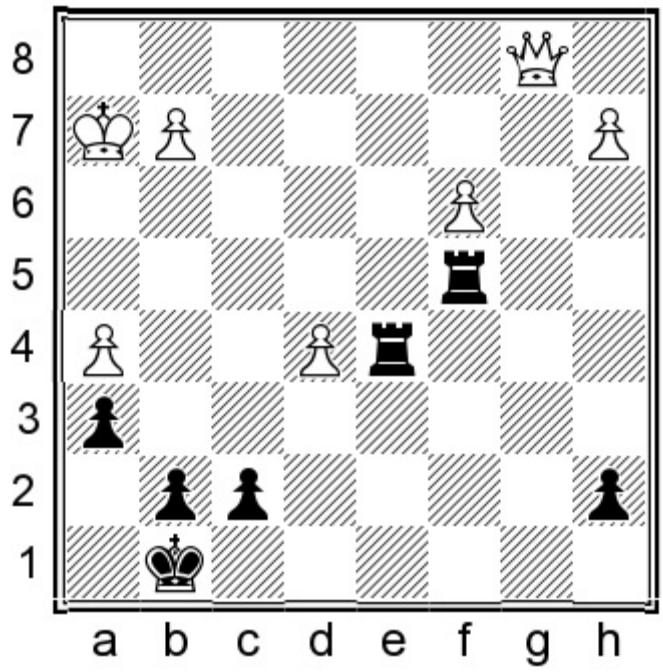
33.♖c2

Black resigned as after 33...♕a4 34.♖cc1! a5 35.♖a1 ♕b4 36.♖a2, there is no hope anymore.

1–0

EXERCISE 60
Shirov Alexei
Anand Viswanathan
B12 Linares 1998

33.♕b1



EVALUATION

As according to my knowledge, the endgame is won for me. Nevertheless, it demands a tedious manoeuvring and gradual improvement of the position of my rooks in order to be able to exploit the numerous White's pawn weaknesses and win. For now, my opponent threatens ♕b8+ and ♕b1+, when he indirectly defends e5 and c3 and goes for the pawn on a7.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Protecting my last rank is of highly importance. Next I can pick-up the weak white pawns. So, I will opt for **33...♖d8 34.♕b7 ♖xc3 35.♕xa7 ♖cc8**, when I am ready for it.

PLAN B

I also think as in Plan A, but I will make it a bit different. I will go for **33...♖c8 34.♕b7 ♖dc5 35.♕d7** (**35.♕xa7 ♖xe5–+**) **35...♖xc3 36.e6 fxe6 37.♕xe6+ ♔h8**, when I should win the resulting ending.

PLAN C

The weak white pawns can wait, as they are going nowhere. I will pick-up the white h-pawn, as to make my king safer: **33...♖h4+ 34.♔g3** (**34.♔g1 ♖xh5 35.e6 fxe6 36.♕b8+ ♔h7 37.♕b1+ ♖df5 38.c4 ♖hg5–+**) **34...♖xh5 35.♕b8+ ♔h7 36.♕b1+ g6 37.♕b7 ♖d3+ 38.♔f4 ♔g7 39.g4 ♖h2 40.e6 ♖f2+ 41.♔e4 ♖g3 42.♕xa7 ♖xg4+ 43.♔e3 ♖f6 44.exf7 ♖xf7 45.♕a5 h5**, when I think that I will win, as the separated white pawns cannot get advanced enough.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 60

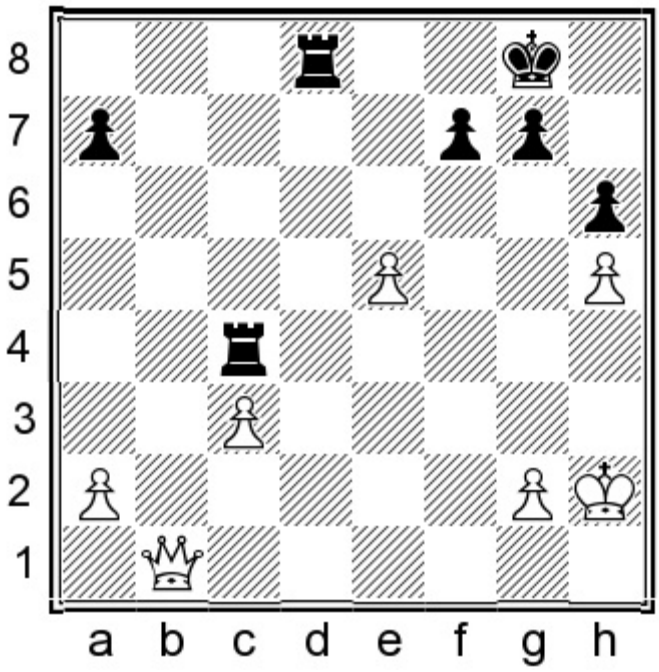
Plan A is not the best — see the game.

Plan B is wrong — the position is drawn.

Plan C is the best — the analysis is correct.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
10	**0**	**50**

33...♖d8?



The back-rank preparations... Black tries to play as per 'theory', but here he should have opted for 33...♖h4+ — see Plan C analysis.

34.♕b7

34.e6!?, could have been played, creating weaknesses around the black king. After 34...fxe6 35.♕e1 ♖c6 36.♕e5, it wouldn't be easy for Black...

34...♖xc3 35.♕xa7 ♖cc8!?

35...♖c6 36.a4 ♖e6 37.a5 ♖ee8 38.♕b6, would be OK for White.

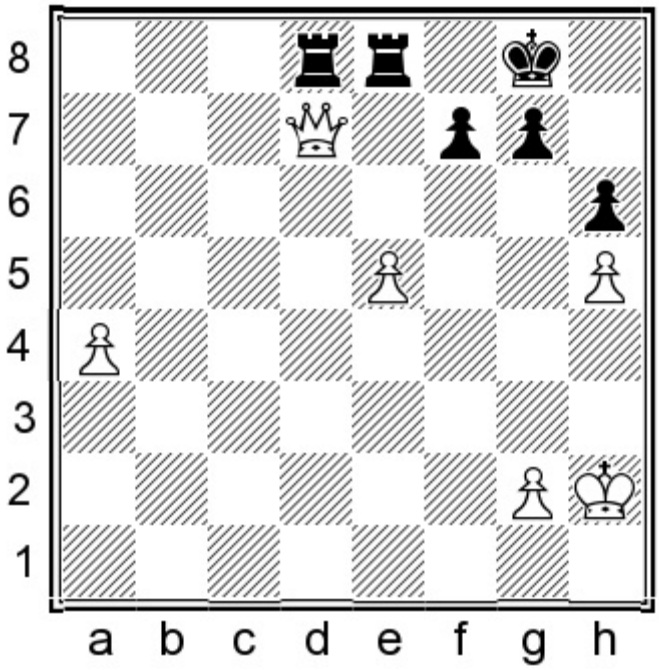
36.a4

White could have saved himself with 36.e6 fxe6 37.♕e7 ♖e8 38.♕b4 ♖a8 39.a4 ♖a6 40.♕c4 ♖ea8 41.♔h3 ♖xa4 42.♕xe6+ ♔h8 43.g4. The problem here for Black is that the pawn ending (after he would take somehow in g4) with h5 vs g7-h6 pawns is drawn.

36...♖a8 37.♕c7 ♖dc8

37...♖d4 38.♕c6 ♖dxa4 39.e6 fxe6 40.♕xe6+ ♔h8, is achieving a well-known drawn position.

38.♕b7 ♖e8 39.♕c6 ♖ac8 40.♕d7 ♖cd8



41.♕c7?

White should always aim for the position examined with 2 vs 2 pawns on the kingside. So, he had to opt for 41.♕b5! ♖b8 42.♕d5 ♖e6 43.♔g3 ♖a6 44.a5 ♖ba8 45.♕d7 ♖xa5 46.e6=.

41...♖d5! 42.a5 ♖dxe5 43.a6 ♖5e7

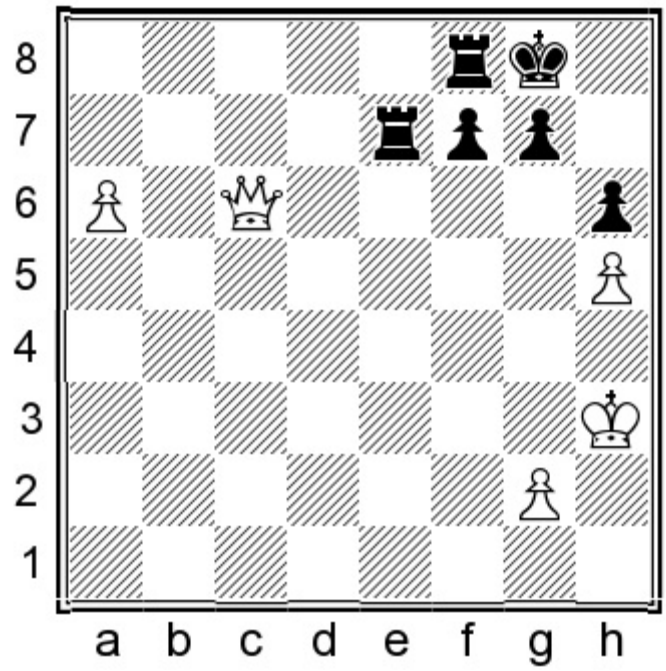
Black could also win with 43...♖xh5+ 44.♔g3 ♖e3+ 45.♔f4 ♖a3 46.♕b8+ ♔h7 47.♕b1+ g6 48.♕b7 ♖f5+ 49.♔e4 ♖a4+ 50.♔e3 ♔g7, but he tries to ‘play it safe’.

44.♕c6 ♖f8!

Now the doubling of the rooks on the a-file can no longer be prevented. The a-pawn falls. Afterwards, the kingside pawns will be wiped out. And the most important: White doesn’t have anymore the resource e6!

45.♔h3

45.♕c5 ♖d7, with ...♖a8 and/or ...♖a7 coming.



45...♖a7 46.g4 ♖fa8 47.♔h4 ♖xa6 48.♕b7 ♖a5 49.♕c6 ♖f8 50.♕b6 ♖g5 51.♕b3 ♔h8 52.♕b4 ♖e8 53.♕a4 ♖d8 54.♕e4 f5! 55.gxf5 ♖f8

And White resigned as both of his pawns falls, without the chance of a perpetual check.

0–1

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CHAPTER 4.
MIXED PIECES ENDINGS

ROOK & BISHOP POWER

The combination of the rook & bishop can generate a mighty force. When these two pieces are cooperating towards certain targets, then success is near!

The bishop, as a long-range piece, can assist from afar an active rook which has penetrated into the opponent's camp.

Of course, always disadvantages do exist:

SOS Tip 1 — Disadvantages

1. The centre is blocked. Then the bishop cannot operate.
2. The bishop can attack only the half squares of the board.

Of course the main requirements for this ending should be the open centre and pawns on both sides, so the bishop can operate to the maximum.

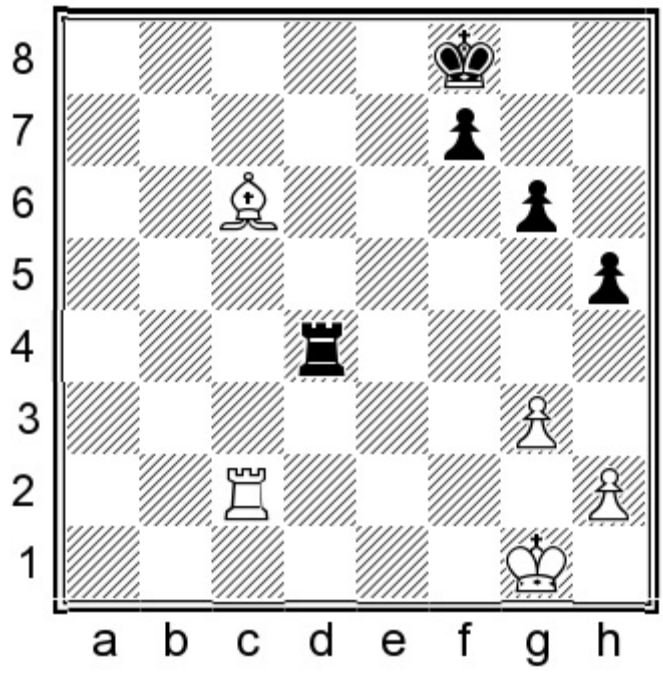
Then a lot of advantages can be generated:

SOS Tip 2 — Advantages

1. Trade rooks: This can lead to favourable bishop vs knight endings.
2. Active pieces: Common targets can be successfully attacked by the combined power of rook & bishop.
3. Passed pawn: A passed pawn is generally easier advancing or protected by the bishop.
4. Rule of the two weaknesses: A rook & bishop can easily combine threats in all sides of the board.

EXERCISE 61
Jussupow Artur
Boensch Uwe
E04 Gelsenkirchen 2001

34...h5



EVALUATION

A typical winning position for me, as my pawn is not on h4, which will create ‘problems’. What I do remember from my ‘education’ is that: 1. The king of the superior (sometimes of the weaker as well!) side should play an important role, assisting the rest of his army. 2. The placement of the rook pawns is of great importance (in general). 3. The defending side should try to preserve the rooks on the board, in order to try to achieve counterplay by attacking the enemy pawns. 4. But of course, when the rook pawn of his opponent has moved, then he should most often exchange them and go for the drawing mechanisms.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I think that first, I should centralise my king, preferably on e4 and then I will push my g-pawn (with h3 first) to g5. Then I will return the extra material on f7, achieving a winning pawn ending. I will start by **35.♗f3 ♖d7 36.♖b2 ♔g7 37.♔f2** and so on.

PLAN B

Exchanging the rooks should allow me to get an easily winning ending, without caring for counterplay. So, I will opt for **35.♖b2 ♖c4 36.♗d5 ♖c7 37.♖b7 ♖xb7 38.♗xb7**, when the rest should be easy.

PLAN C

Black has only one weak spot; the f7-square. So, I should get all my pieces on the attack of it, by transferring my king to e7 or e8. A simple but effective plan and I can start how I like.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 61

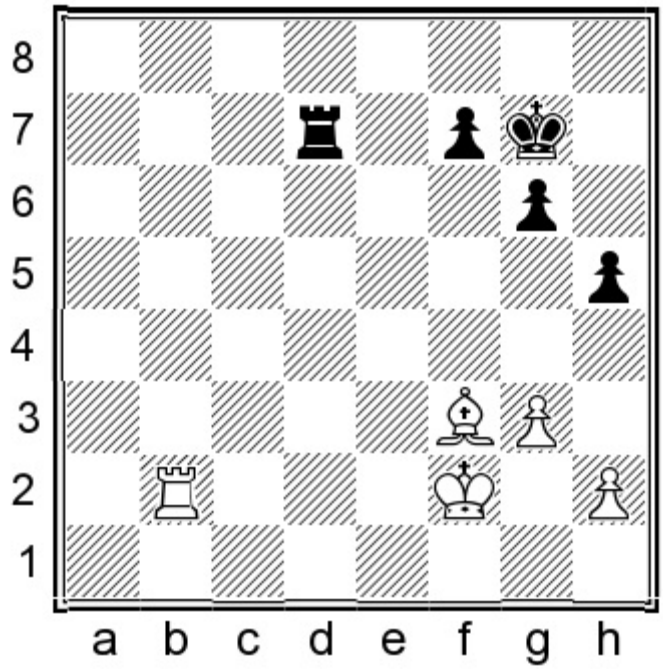
Plan A is best — see the game. Also note that, believe it or not, this is the only winning plan for White in this position and it works as long as the white h-pawn is not on h4; otherwise the position is drawn! Knowledge of this kind of positions is more than an 'obligation'!

Plan B is not working, as Black can opt for (**36.♗d5**) **36...♖d4**, or **36...♖c5 37.♖b8+ ♔g7 38.♗b3 ♖f5**. White will have then to go for Plan A.

Plan C is not a successful one without Black's help. White will have again to go for Plan A.

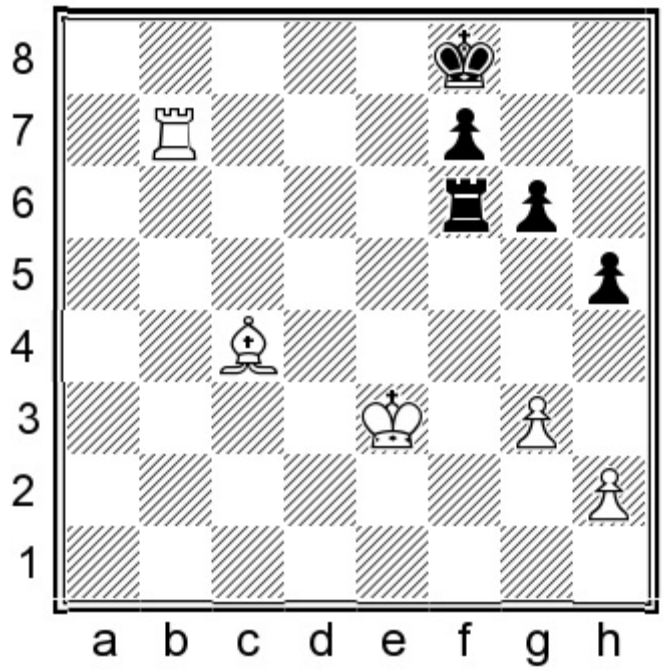
MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**30**	**30**

35.♗f3 ♖d7 36.♖b2 ♔g7 37.♔f2



37.♖b7 ♖d3 38.♗e2 ♖c3 39.♔f2, doesn't change much.

37...♖d6 38.♖b7 ♖d2+ 39.♗e2 ♖d6 40.♗c4 ♖f6+ 41.♔e3 ♔f8



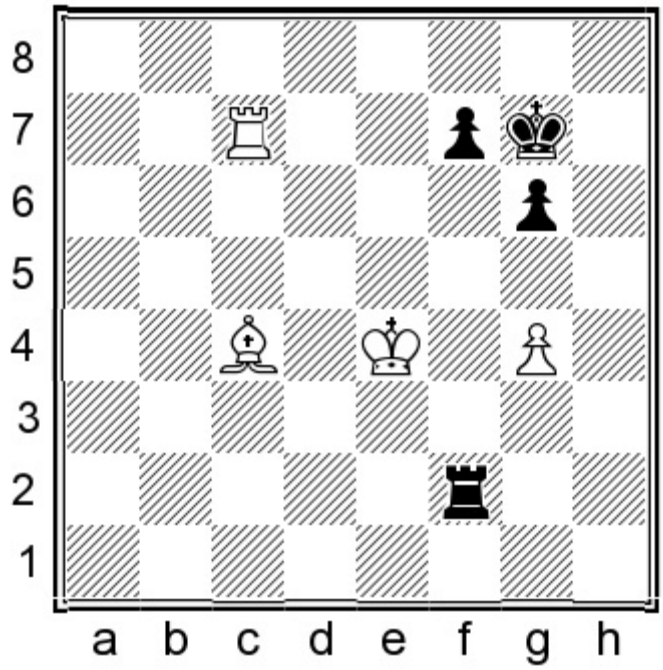
42.h3!

The preparations are beginning!

42...♔g7

No salvation by 42...♖f5 43.g4 hxg4 44.hxg4 ♖f6 45.♔e4 g5 46.♔e5 ♖f4 47.♗d3!, when mating threats are on.

43.g4 hxg4 44.hxg4 ♔f8 45.♖c7 ♔g7 46.♔e4 ♖f2



46...g5 47.♔e5 ♖f4 48.♗e6+–.

47.g5! ♖f5

Time to finish the job!

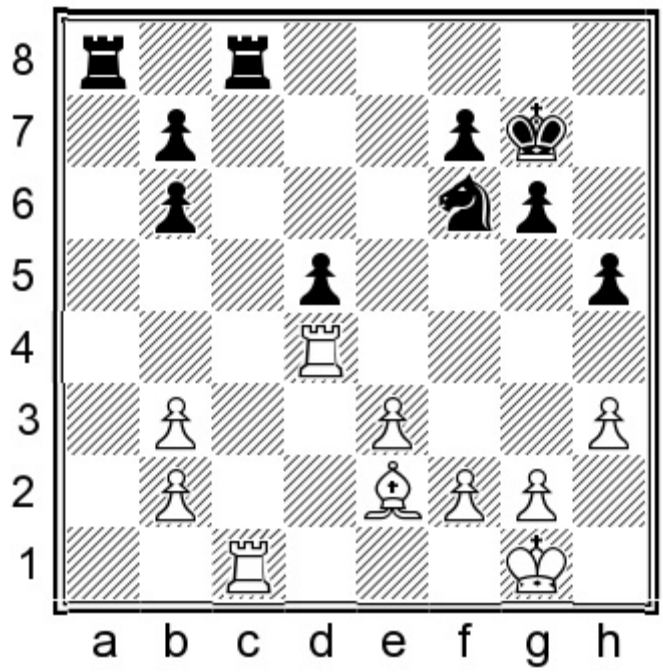
48.♖xf7+! ♖xf7 49.♗xf7 ♔xf7 50.♔d5

And Black resigned as the pawn ending is lost for him.

1–0

EXERCISE 62
Miles Anthony
Gdanski Jacek
D03 Iraklion 1993

27...♖ec8



EVALUATION

It looks that I am holding a small advantage, mainly due to my opponent's isolated d-pawn. Also my bishop looks like a better piece, as it can attack the black d-pawn. But the both sides' doubled b-pawns can be targets for anybody and sometimes I would face the risk to end in an one-side 4:3 pawns rook ending, which is of course drawn.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I understand that Black will get sufficient counterplay by the exchange of one pair of rooks, so I feel that I have to preserve both of them! One of my rooks will defend and the other will attack my opponent's weaknesses. So, I will opt for the not so common **28.♖b1 ♖c2 29.♗f3**, preserving an advantage.

PLAN B

I feel that I have no time to lose, so I should immediately create an attack on the black d-pawn. This is best done by **28.♖xc8 ♖xc8 29.g4 hxg4 30.hxg4 ♖c2 31.♗f3 ♖xb2 32.♖b4**, when I will be on the top.

PLAN C

There is no need to exchange rooks yet, but I can use my b2-pawn to play **28.♖c3**. After something like **28...♖c6 29.♗f3 ♖a1+ 30.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 31.♗xd1 ♖xc3 32.bxc3 ♘e4 33.c4 dxc4 34.bxc4**, I should have a slight advantage in the ending, as my bishop should be a better piece than the black knight.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 62

Plan A is best — see the game.

Plan B is not satisfactory; after **32...♖d2! 33.♖xb6 d4 34.♖xb7 dxe3 35.fxe3 ♘d7**, Black should have enough counterplay to preserve the draw.

Plan C is not much either. After **34...♔f6**, Black should be OK.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**10**	**10**

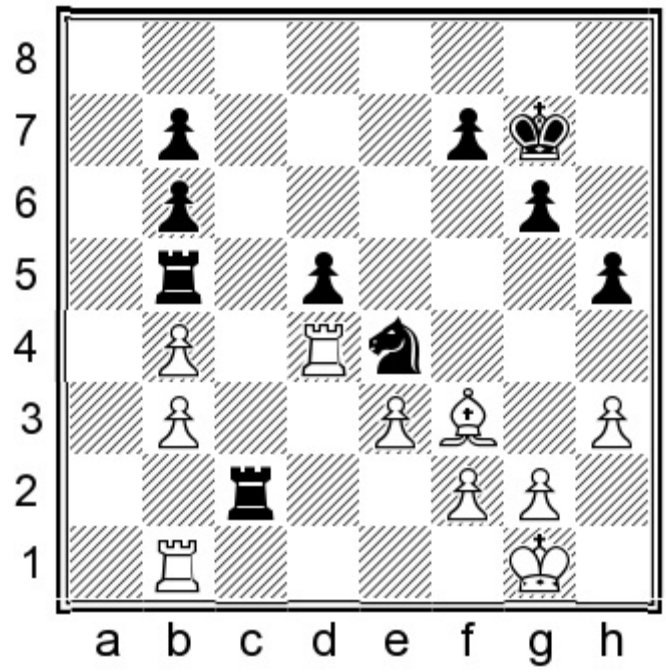
28.♖b1! ♖c2 29.♗f3 ♖a5?!

The start of a wrong plan. Black had to opt for 29...♖ac8 30.g4 hxg4 31.hxg4±.

30.b4! ♖b5

30...♖a2 31.♗xd5 ♘xd5 32.♖xd5±.

31.b3 ♘e4



32.♖e1!

A very strong move, probably missed by Black when he thought for his plan.

32...♖d2

Black cannot take the f2-pawn by no means: 32...♘xf2? 33.♖e2+–, or 32...♖xf2? 33.♗xe4, while White threats ♗e2!. But Black probably should choose 32...♘c3 33.g4 hxg4 34.hxg4, when White is on the top but nothing is clear-cut yet.

33.♖d1! ♖xd1+?

The less evil was 33...♖b2 34.♗xe4 dxe4 35.♖xe4 ♖xb3 36.♖dd4 ♖b2 37.g4 hxg4 38.hxg4±.

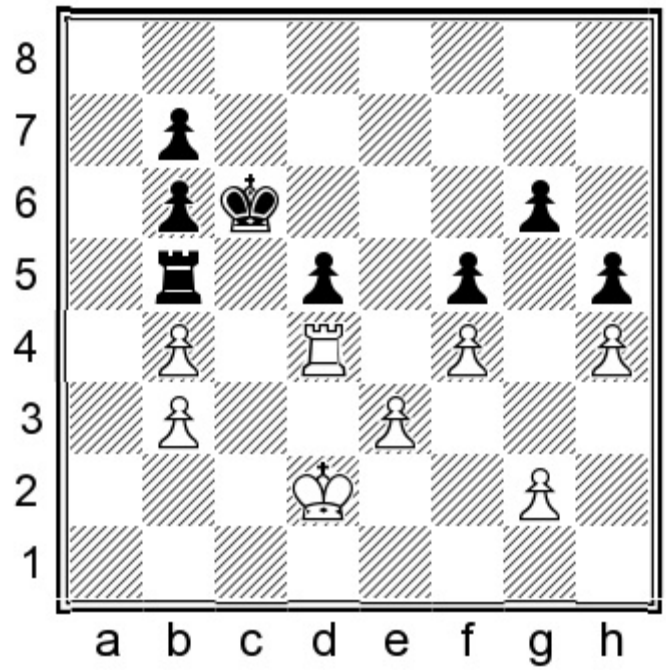
34.♗xd1 ♘c3 35.♗f3 ♔f6 36.♔f1 ♔e5 37.♗e2!

Another exchange that seals black's rook misery.

37...♘xe2 38.♔xe2 f5 39.f4+ ♔d6 40.h4!

Fixing any counterplay.

40...♔c6 41.♔d2

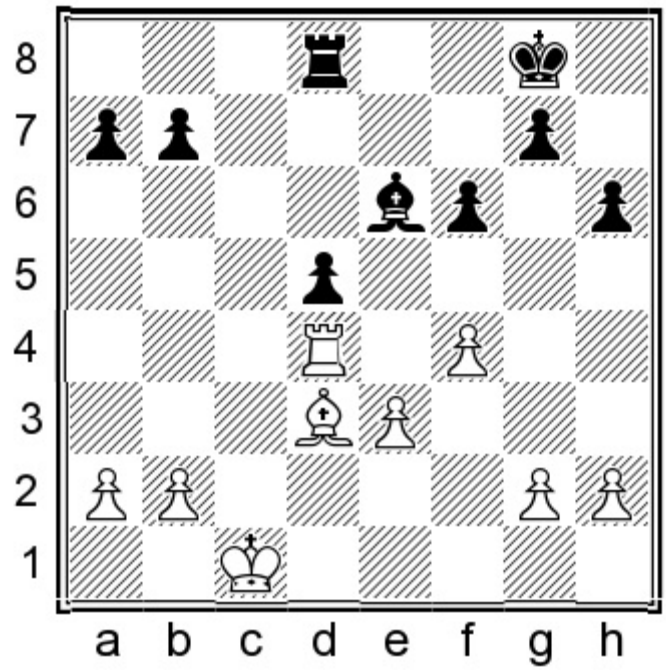


And Black resigned, as White's plan is simple: he will bring his king to a4 and while the black king will be on c6, the move g3 will create a zugzwang and eventually the win of the unfortunate black rook.

1–0

EXERCISE 63
Szabo Laszlo
Penrose Jonathan
A33 Bath 1973

21...h6



EVALUATION

My advantage is small but permanent. It is solely based on my opponent's weak d-pawn, which stands on d5, thereby giving me the better bishop as well. But one weakness is not enough for a win, so I should create further ones and re-shuffle/improve my pieces. Still, this might not give me a win but I am risking nothing as well — Black is lacking counterplay.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I think that my plan is simple and consists of two phases. During the first phase I will maximise the potential of my pieces, bringing my king to d4 and my bishop to f3, while my rook will create weaknesses on the queenside. The second phase consists of the kingside breakthrough with g5. Black can hardly react to this plan, as the absence of an adequate number of offensive and defensive pieces leads him to passivity. So, good looks **22.♔d2 ♔f8 23.♖a4 a6 24.♖b4 ♖d7 25.♔c3 ♔e7 26.♔d4 ♔d8 27.♗e2 ♔c7 28.♗f3**, when I am ready for phase two.

PLAN B

I should proceed just like Plan A, but a 'small' difference: my bishop should be placed on b3, creating the threat e4 in certain positions. So, good looks **22.♔d2 ♔f8 23.♖a4 a6 24.♖b4 ♖d7 25.♔c3 ♔e7 26.♔d4 ♔d8 27.♗c2 ♔c7 28.♗b3**, when I am ready for phase two.

PLAN C

I think that Plan B is giving a good guide, but I must win some space as well, so I will insert the move f5 in my intentions: **22.f5 ♗f7 23.♔d2 ♔f8 24.♖a4 a6 25.♖b4 ♖d7 26.♔c3 ♔e7 27.♔d4 ♔d8 28.♗c2 ♔c7 29.♗b3**, with advantage.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		

A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 63

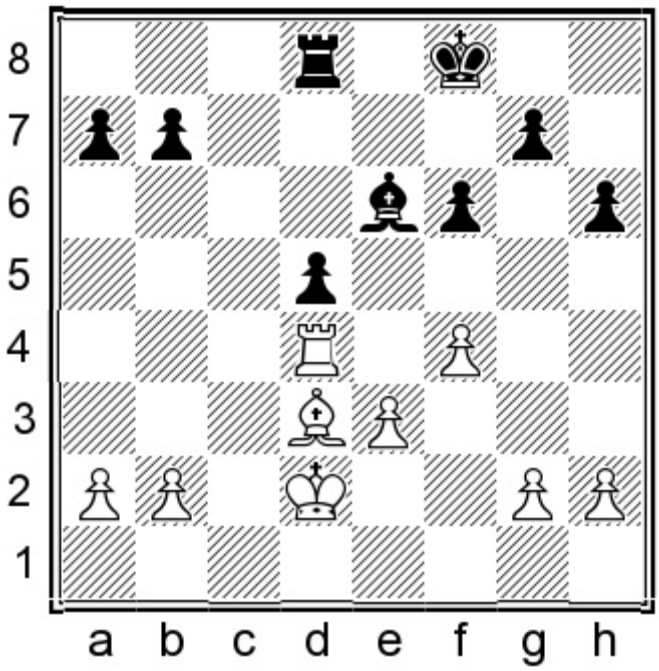
Plan A is best — see the game.

Plan B is missing the potention of advancing the pawns on the kingside by the help of the f3-bishop.

Plan C is a bit insane; no need to place the pawns in the 'wrong' colour.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**20**	**0**

22.♔d2 ♔f8



23.♖a4

Creating some more weaknesses is always an enjoyable feature!

23...a6 24.♖b4 ♖d7 25.♔c3 ♔e7

25...d4+? 26.♖xd4 ♖xd4 27.exd4± ♗xa2? 28.b3, is losing a piece.

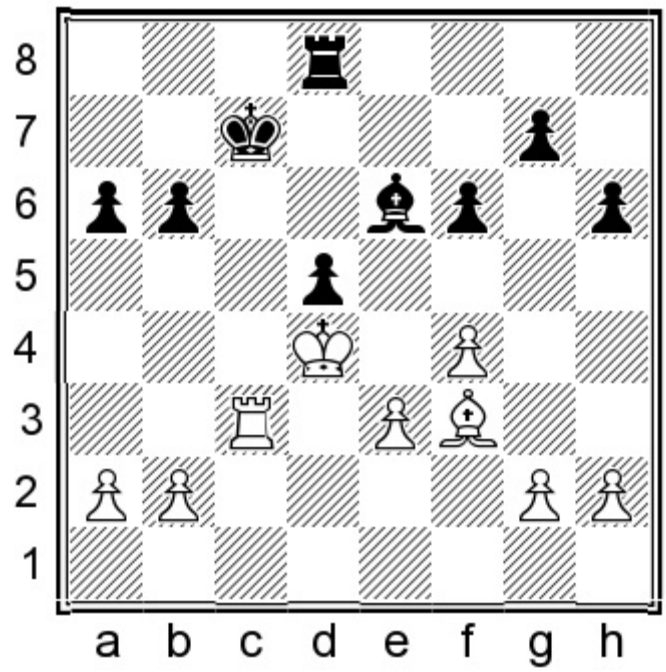
26.♔d4 ♔d8 27.♗e2!

The king found its proper place; now it's the bishop's turn.

27...♔c7 28.♗f3 b6 29.♖b3

The rook will be needed in the kingside, so he has to return back.

29...♖d8 30.♖c3+



30...♔b7?

This is an easy losing move. The king belongs in the centre, either to press or either just to defend. White would be better after 30...♔d6 31.h3 ♖b8 32.g4±, but far away from winning.

31.g4 ♖d6

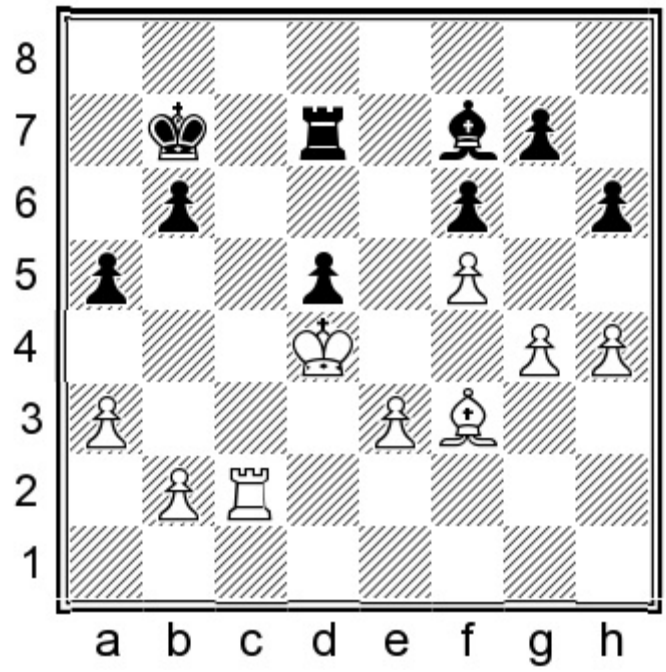
If 31...g5, then 32.♖c2 ♗f7 33.h4! ♖d7 34.♖h2 and the white's rook penetration in-to Black's camp will be decisive.

32.a3 a5 33.h4 ♗f7 34.f5!

Creating a real target; the black g7-pawn!

34...♖d8 35.♖c2 ♖d7

35...g6 36.fxg6 ♗xg6 37.♖f2 ♔c6 38.♖f1 ♗f7 (38...♖d6 39.♖c1+ ♔d7 40.♗xd5) 39.♗g2 ♖d6 40.g5+–.



36.g5!

Fulfilling the second phase.

36...fxg5

The alternative is 36...hxg5 37.hxg5 ♗g8 38.g6! (Black's bishop now is just an observer) 38...♖d6 39.♗e2! ♖d8 40.♗b5 ♖d6 41.a4 ♖d8 (41...♔b8 42.♖c6) 42.♖c6+–.

37.hxg5 hxg5 38.♖g2 ♖d6

38...♔c6 39.♖xg5 ♗e8 (39...♗g8 40.f6) 40.a4+–.

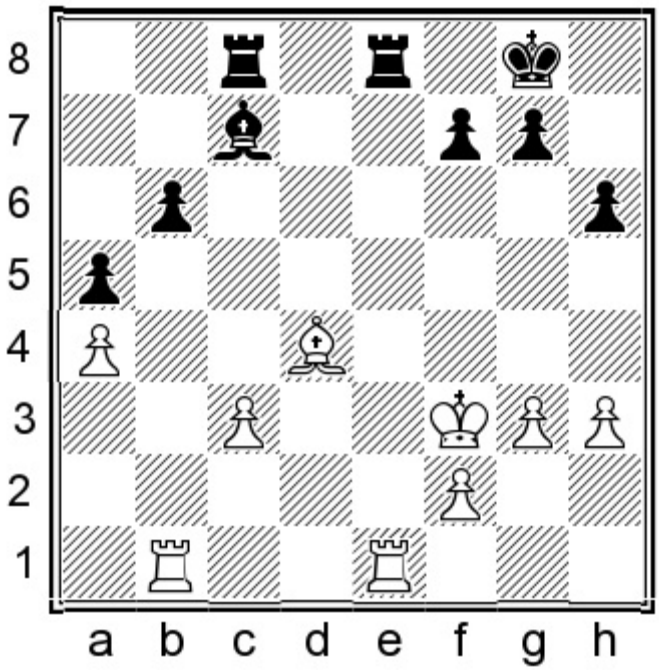
39.♖xg5 g6 40.fxg6 ♖xg6

Black resigned due to 41.♗xd5+ ♔c7 42.♖xg6 ♗xg6 43.♔e5.

1–0

EXERCISE 64
Carlsen Magnus
Caruana Fabiano
C00 Bilbao 2012

28...♖ac8



EVALUATION

I am standing somewhat better, due to my series of very small advantages, as better king, centralised pieces and pressure on b6. This slight advantage is annoying for Black, who will have to defend for many moves, hoping at the best to make a draw — my isolated c3-pawn cannot be considered weak, as Black has nearly no way to attack it; on the contrary it safeguards my bishop.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

A breakthrough on the kingside should be my primary thought, as my pressure on the queenside cannot be enough. So, I should opt for **29.g4 g6 30.h4** and h5, when Black should be in real trouble.

PLAN B

Centralisation is an important factor, which I should benefit by it. The first step is to further activate my king by **29.♖e4**. After **29...g6 30.g4!**, I will get some more space advantage which cannot be harmful and maybe a weak black pawn (h6) will be further created.

PLAN C

I do not see great prospects for my rooks, so I should do something about this. After **29.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 30.♖b5 ♖e6 31.♖d5**, activating the rook, I should be on the right track, going on the 7th rank or exchange my weak pawn by means of c4-c5, creating a real weakness on a5.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 64

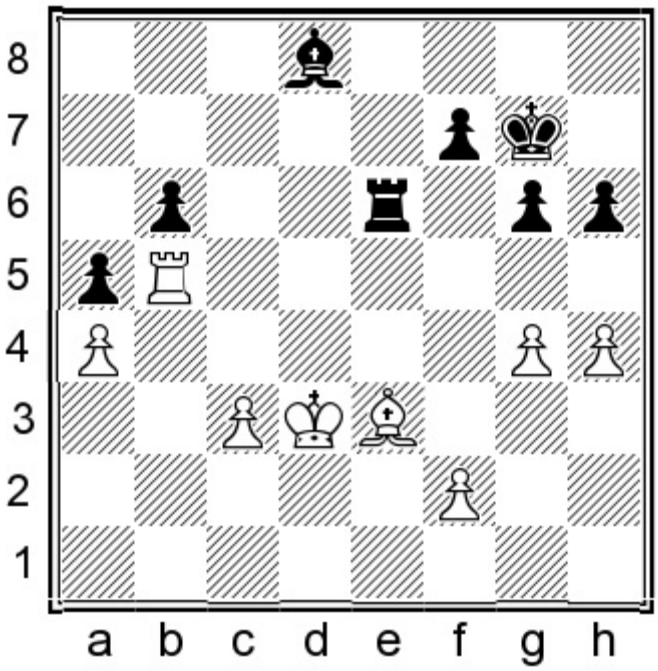
Plan A is good as well and can be applied.

Plan B is best — see the game.

Plan C is not much, as it gives Black good chances to save the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
40	**50**	**10**

29.♖e4! g6 30.g4! ♔f8 31.h4 ♖xe4 32.♔xe4 ♖e8+ 33.♔d3 ♖e6 34.♗e3 ♔g7 35.♖b5 ♗d8



36.h5!

The typical lever to undermine Black's structure. Now whatever will be played, a weak pawn on h6 will be a fact.

36...♖d6+ 37.♔c4 ♖c6+ 38.♔d5 ♖e6

38...♖xc3?, runs into 39.♗d4++–.

39.♗d4+ ♔f8 40.f4 ♗c7?!

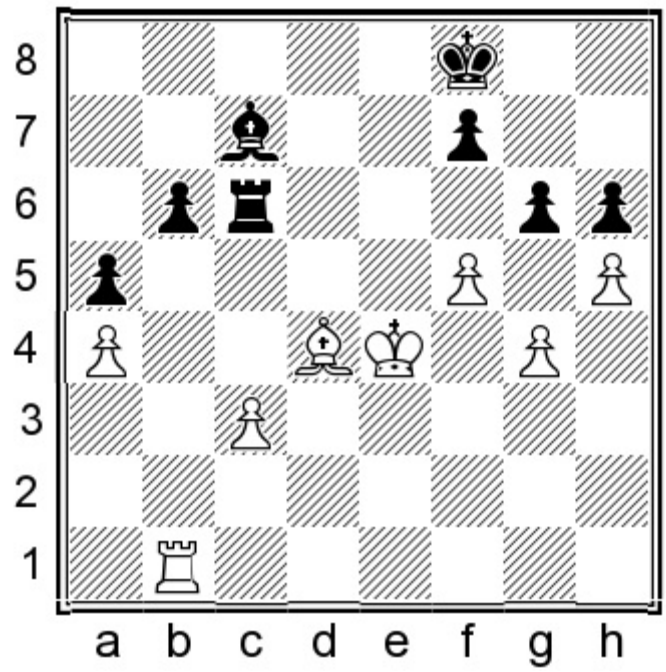
Black should also try to centralise his king: 40...♔e7 41.c4 (41.f5 ♖d6+ 42.♔e4 gxh5 43.gxh5 ♖c6±)

41...♔d7 42.f5 gxf5 43.gxf5 ♖d6+ 44.♔e4 ♖c6 45.♖d5+ ♔e8 46.c5! and in both cases Black can still offer tough resistance, but it is hard to believe that he can really defend in the long run.

41.f5!

White is preparing to open roads for his pieces and takes away e6 from Black's rook.

41...♖d6+ 42.♔e4 ♖c6 43.♖b1!



It is time to redirect the rook so that it can operate quickly on both wings — Black is in troubles.

43...♔e8

Alternatives as 43...gxh5 44.gxh5 ♖c4 45.♔d5! ♖xa4 46.♔c6 ♗b8 47.♖g1 ♖c4+ 48.♔xb6+–, or 43...g5 44.♔d5 ♖d6+ 45.♔c4 ♔e7 46.♖e1+ ♔d7 47.♔b5+–, are hardly sufficient...

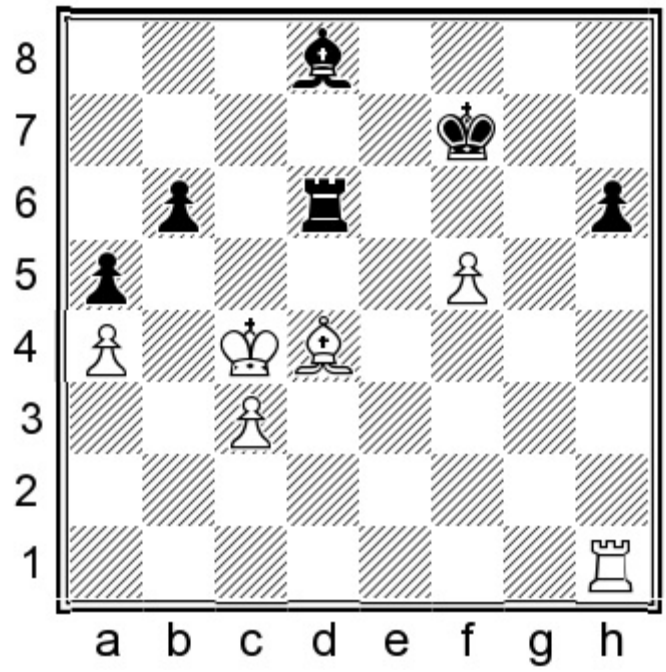
44.hxg6 fxg6 45.♖h1!

Typical play on two wings. The defender has more problems to bring his forces to the other front than the attacker — the two weaknesses rule again...

45...♔f7 46.♔d5 ♖d6+ 47.♔c4 gxf5?!

Usually it is good for the defender to exchange pawns. But this is an exception as in the following the whole kingside is exchanged and Black has no means of creating counterplay there. Black had to go for 47...g5!? and hope that White will not find everything: 48.♔b5 ♗d8 49.♖e1 ♗f6 50.♗xb6 ♗xc3 (50...h5 51.gxh5 ♖d5+ 52.♔c6 ♖xf5 53.c4 g4 54.♖g1+–) 51.♖c1 ♗b4 52.♖c7+ ♔f6 53.♖h7 ♖d5+ 54.♔c6 ♖d6+ 55.♔b7 ♖d2 56.♖xh6+ ♔f7 57.♖h7+ ♔g8 58.♖c7 ♖g2 59.♖c4+–.

48.gxf5 ♗d8



49.f6!

This breaks the lines of communication in Black's camp. Now it is over as Black's king is too far away from the queenside.

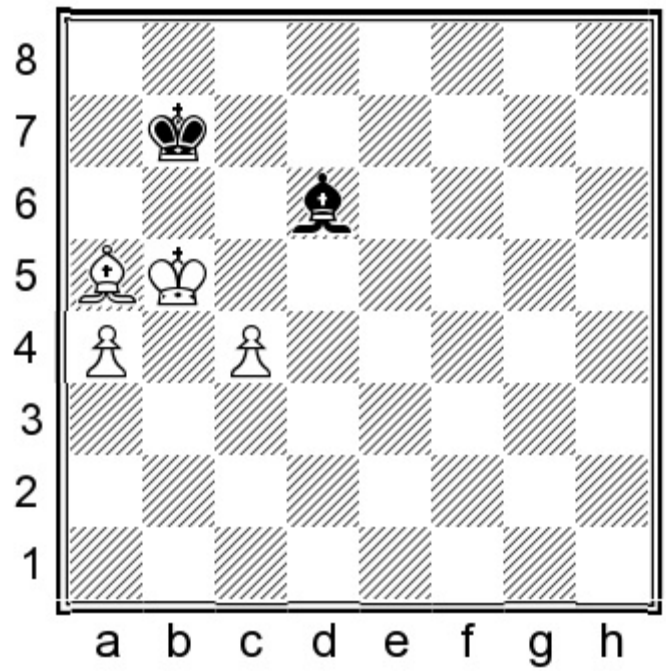
49...♗xf6

After 49...♔g6, White wins with 50.♖g1+ ♔f7 51.♖g7+ ♔e6 52.♖h7+–.

50.♖xh6 ♗e7 51.♖xd6 ♗xd6 52.♔b5

And the remaining black pawns are just falling!

52...♔e6 53.♗xb6 ♔d7 54.c4 ♔c8 55.♗xa5 ♔b7



56.♗b4

Of course not 56.c5? ♗xc5 57.♔xc5 ♔a8=. White has to be a bit careful, as Black is hoping to sac his bishop for the c-pawn and achieve a theoretical draw.

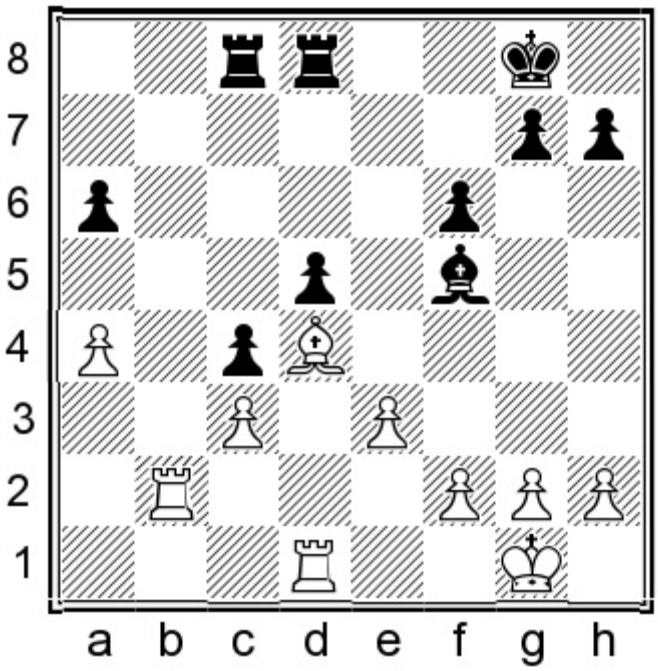
56...♗f4 57.c5 ♔a7 58.c6 ♔b8 59.a5 ♔a7 60.a6 ♔a8 61.♗c5 ♗b8 62.♔c4 ♗c7 63.♔d5 ♗d8 64.♔e6 ♗c7 65.♔d7 ♗a5 66.♗e7

And Black resigned, as the win is near: 66...♔a7 67.♗d8 ♔xa6 68.♗xa5 ♔xa5 69.c7+–.

1–0

EXERCISE 65
Grivas Efstratios
Papafitsoros Konstantinos
D32 Athens 2006

27...bxc4



EVALUATION

In this position I can notice that there are a lot of isolated pawns around, for both sides (a6, a4, c3 and d5). The most important factor is which side can attack them first and this is me, so I am holding the advantage. Another important factor is the opposite-coloured bishops; a factor which can help Black to survive, but for the moment my d4-bishop is better placed compared to its counterpart. My bishop can at the same time attack and defend; its counterpart can only defend and has not a stable base. Finally, my control of the only open b-file cannot be underestimated.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I do not think that I can benefit form the open b-file, as Black controls the important b1-square. So, I should focus on the other two parts of the board by **28.♗b6 ♖d7 29.♖d4 ♖b8 30.a5**, preparing kingside operations by f3 and g4. This should give me the advantage.

PLAN B

As I cannot double rooks on the b-file, I should prepare a 'hook' by **28.a5**, creating a safe square for my rook on b6. Then I can proceed as in Plan C.

PLAN C

I think that I should stabilise my b-file control by **28.♖b6 ♗c2** (worst is **28...♖a8 29.a5 ♗c2 30.♖d2 ♗b3 31.f3 ♖d7 32.g4!**±, as my clear plan — h4, g5 and ♖g2 — can hardly be faced) **29.♖a1 ♖a8** (I win a pawn after **29...a5 30.♖b5 ♖a8 31.♗b6 ♖db8 32.♗xa5** [**32.♗c7 ♖c8 33.♗xa5 ♖a7**] **32...♗xa4 33.♖xd5**±) **30.a5 ♖dc8** and now by **31.f3**, I am ready for kingside operations.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 65

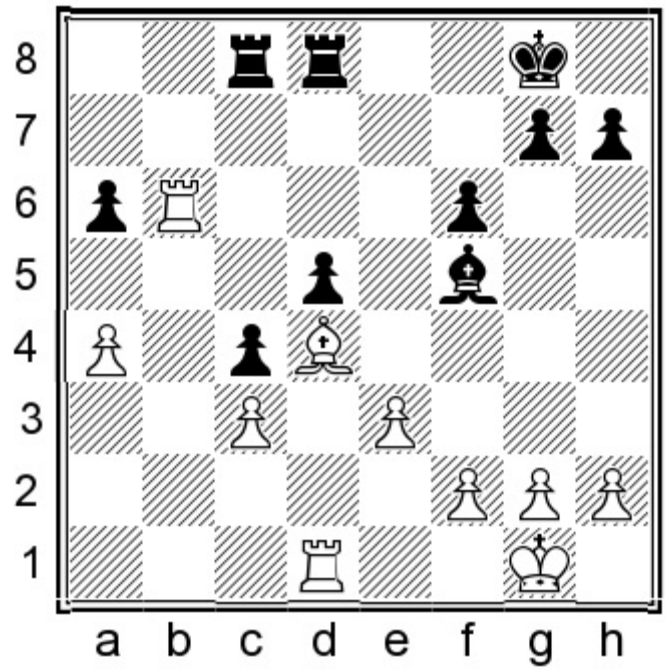
Plan A is out of the question and makes no sense.

Plan B is quite similar to Plan C.

Plan C is best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
0	**45**	**50**

28.♖b6!



28...♗c2!

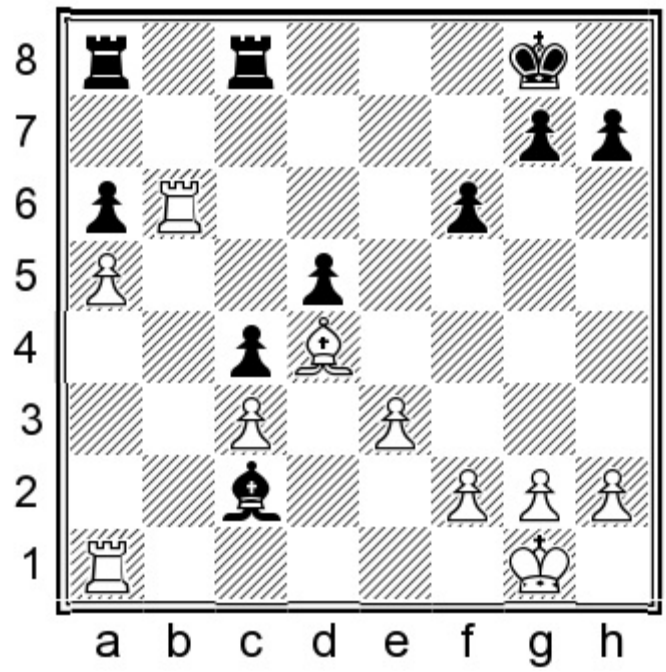
Worst is 28...♖a8 29.a5 ♗c2 30.♖d2 ♗b3 31.f3 ♖d7 32.g4!±, as White's clear plan (h4, g5 and ♖g2) can hardly be faced.

29.♖a1 ♖a8

White wins a pawn after 29...a5 30.♖b5 ♖a8 31.♗b6 ♖db8 32.♗xa5 (32.♗c7 ♖c8 33.♗xa5 ♖a7) 32...♗xa4 33.♖xd5±.

30.a5 ♖dc8

It looks like Black could put up a tougher defence with 30...♖db8, but White can continue with 31.♖a2 ♗b3 32.♖d2 ♔f7 33.♗c5 ♖xb6 34.axb6 ♔e6 35.e4!±.



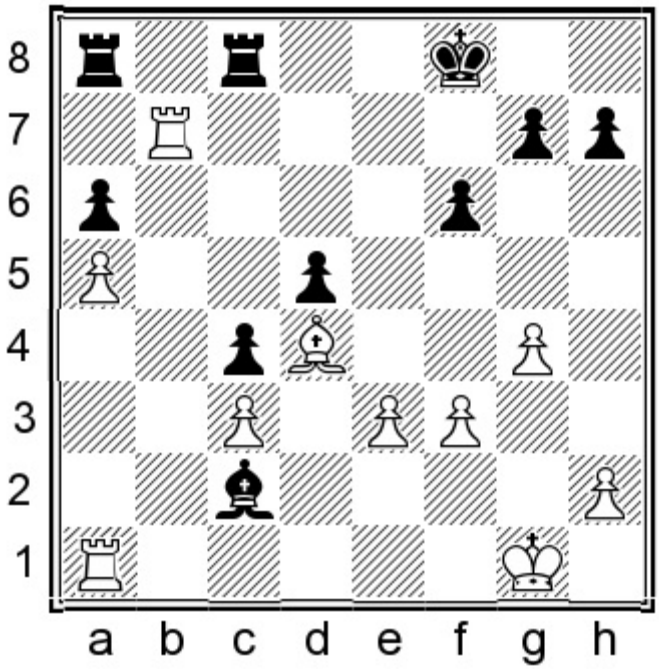
31.f3!

As White keeps the queenside under control, he must seek as usual for a second front and that can be found only in the kingside.

31...♔f8 32.g4! ♔e8

Black is doomed to passivity and there is not much that he can do to change his fate: 32...♖cb8 33.♖a2 ♗b3 (33...♗d1?! 34.♔f2 ♔f7 35.♖d2 ♗b3 36.♗c5 ♖xb6 37.axb6 ♔e6 38.e4+–) 34.♖d2±.

33.♖b7 ♔f8



34.♖a2!

White's advantage has increased, due to his active pieces. The one white rook controls the only open file and the second one comes to the d- or g-file, creating more threats.

34...♗b3 35.♖d2 ♗a4

35...♖cb8 36.♗c5+ ♔g8 37.♖b6±.

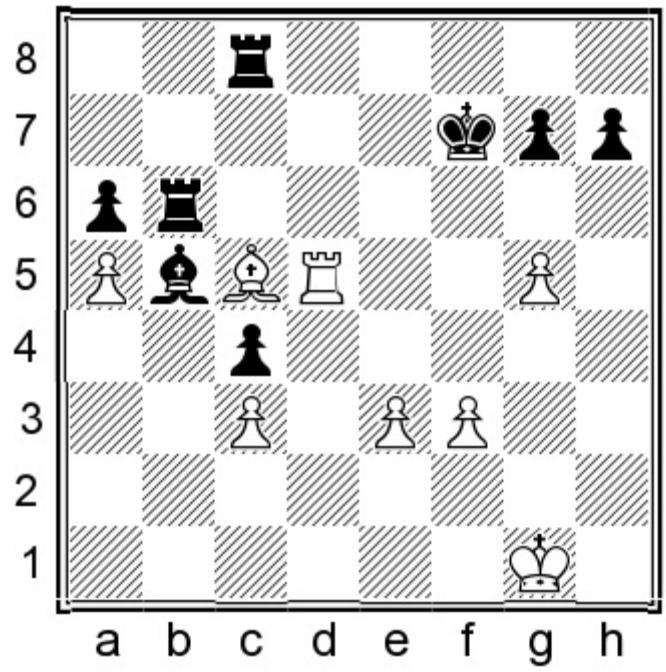
36.h4 ♗c6 37.♖b6 ♗b5

37...♔f7 38.g5 fxg5 39.hxg5 ♔g6 40.♖h2±.

38.g5 fxg5 39.hxg5 ♖ab8?!

Losing the d5 isolani pawn. More stubborn was 39...♖c6 40.♖b7 ♖g6 41.♖g2±.

40.♗c5+ ♔f7 41.♖xd5 ♖xb6



42.♗xb6

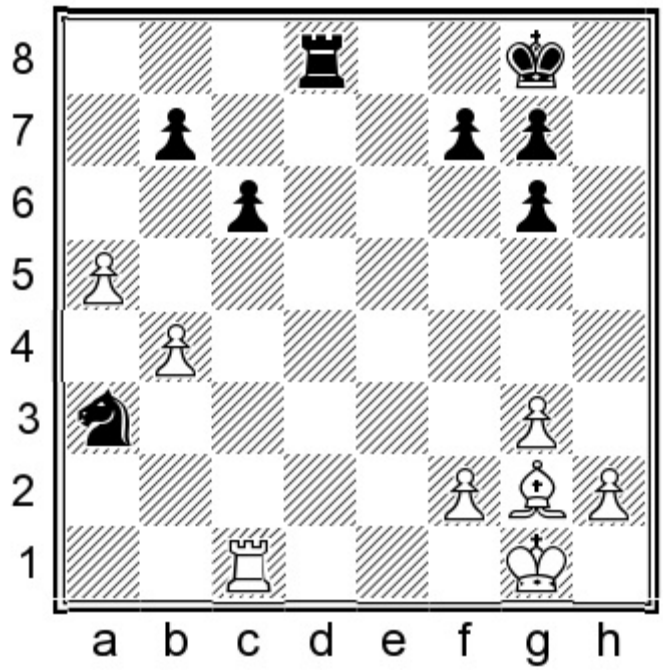
42.axb6! ♗c6 43.♖f5+ ♔g6 44.e4 a5 45.♖e5+–, was even better.

42...♗c6 43.♖f5+ ♔g6 44.e4 ♗d7 45.♖d5 ♗c6 46.♖e5 ♖e8 47.♖c5 ♗b5 48.♔f2 ♖e7 49.♔g3 ♖d7 50.♖e5 ♖d6 51.♗d4 ♖d7 52.f4 ♔f7 53.f5 ♖e7? 54.♖xe7+ ♔xe7 55.♗xg7 ♔f7 56.♗d4 ♗c6 57.♔f4 ♗a4 58.e5 ♗d1 59.e6+ ♔e8 60.g6! hxg6 61.f6

1–0

EXERCISE 66
Stefanova Antoaneta
Ruan Lufei
D11 Rostov 2011

28...♘a3



EVALUATION

In this open type of position, my bishop is a stronger piece than the black knight, as it has more freedom of moving and of creating threats and attacks. Also the queenside, as well the kingside black pawn structures are weak and can be attacked by my bishop, as most of the black pawns are placed in the colour squares of it. I should combine the forces of my rook & bishop to create threats.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I feel that I have an interesting and out of the box idea here, to sacrifice my bishop for two connected pawns, which can turn into a real force. After **29.♗xc6 bxc6** (**29...♖c8**, loses to **30.♖a1**) **30.♖xc6**, I think that my chances are rather good, as my pawns will soon dangerously advance.

PLAN B

Getting my pieces to activity is a must here. This is best done by **29.a6 bxa6 30.♖xc6**, when my general combined threat of ♗d5 and ♖c7 will win material, as the black knight is misplaced and needs a number of moves to return into safety.

PLAN C

The black knight is misplaced and this should drive my thoughts. After **29.♗f1 ♖d4 30.♖c3 ♘b1 31.♖d3 ♖xb4 32.♖d8+ ♔h7 33.♖b8**, my threats are strong and dangerous, thereby giving me the advantage.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 66

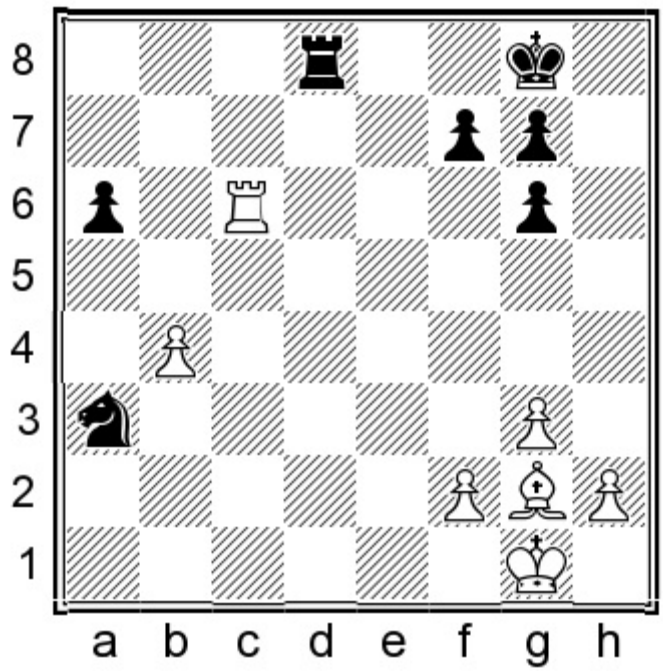
Plan A is out of the question and makes no sense, as White is fighting just for the draw.

Plan B is best — see the game.

Plan C is nothing special; after **30...♘b5! 31.♗xb5 cxb5 32.♖c7** (**32.♖c8+ ♔h7 33.♖c7 f6 34.♖xb7 ♖xb4 35.a6 ♖a4 36.a7 b4=**) **32...♖xb4 33.♖xb7 ♖b1+ 34.♔g2 f6**, the position is drawn.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
0	**50**	**10**

29.a6! bxa6 30.♖xc6



30...♘b1

30...♖b8 31.♗d5!, can't satisfy Black as well.

31.♗f1

Even stronger seems to be 31.h4! ♖d1+ 32.♔h2 ♖d4 33.♖xa6 ♖xb4 34.♗d5.

31...♖b8 32.♗c4! ♘d2

Or 32...♖xb4 33.♖c8+ ♔h7 34.♗xf7.

33.♗d5 ♖xb4 34.♖xa6 ♖b8 35.♖a7! ♖f8 36.♖b7!

Now the black knight is trapped and Black is forced to lose her f7-pawn to save her piece.

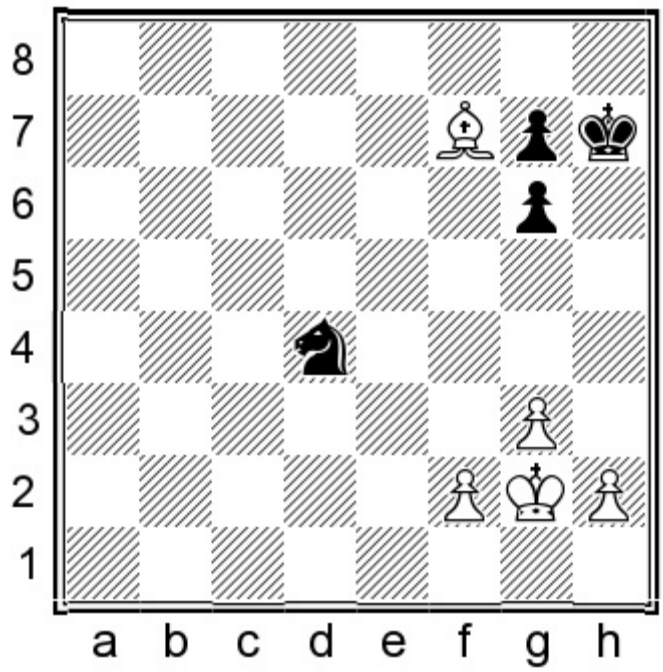
36...♖d8 37.♗xf7+ ♔h7

So, White won a pawn and her chances to convert it are rather high, also due the weak black pawn structure.

38.♖b4 ♖d4?

This loses. Black had to opt for 38...g5 39.♖b6 ♘f3+ 40.♔g2 ♘e5 41.♗e6±.

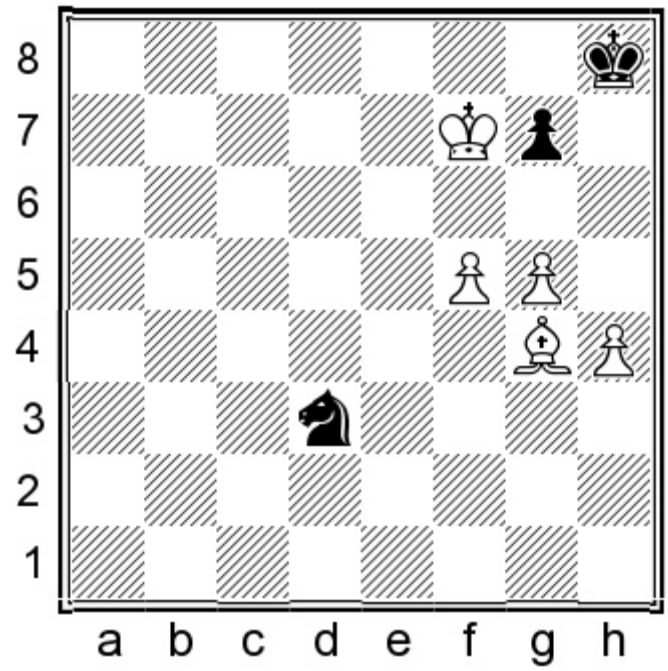
39.♖xd4 ♘f3+ 40.♔g2 ♘xd4



41.h4! ♔h6 42.f4!

The g6-pawn is fixed and it will be lost.

42...♘f5 43.♔h3 ♔h7 44.g4 ♘d6 45.♗d5 ♔h8 46.♔g3 ♘c8 47.♔f3 ♘e7 48.♗b3 ♔h7 49.♔e4 ♘c6 50.♔d5 ♘b8 51.♔d6 ♘a6 52.♗c2 ♔h6 53.♗e4 ♘b4 54.♔e7 ♘a2 55.♔f7 ♔h7 56.♗xg6+ ♔h8 57.♗c2 ♘c3 58.f5 ♘d5 59.g5 ♘f4 60.♗e4 ♘h5 61.♗f3 ♘f4 62.♗g4 ♘d3



Obviously White should win this ending, being two healthy pawns-up. But the stalemating position of the black king and the wrong white bishop's colour of the promoting h8-square, gives Black some chances if White goes wrong.

63.♔f8?

63.f6!, was good enough 63...gxf6 (63...♘e5+ 64.♔e7 gxf6 65.gxf6 ♔h7 [65...♘g6+ 66.♔e8 ♘xh4 67.f7 ♘g6 68.♗h5! {68.♗f5? ♘f8!=} 68...♔g7 69.♗xg6 ♔xg6 70.f8=♕] 66.♔e6 ♘c6 67.♗f5+ ♔h6 68.♔d6 ♘d8 69.♔d7 ♘f7 70.♔e7 ♘e5 71.♗e4+–) 64.gxf6 ♘e5+ 65.♔e6 ♘g6 66.h5+–. 63.♔e7, would do the job as well: 63...♘f4 64.♗f3 ♔g8 65.♔e8+–.

63...♘e5! 64.♗f3

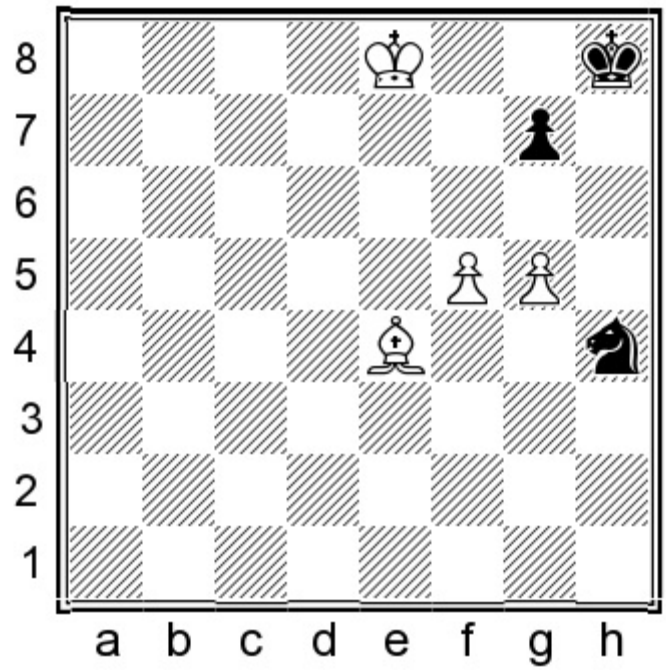
Now 64.f6, doesn't win anymore: 64...gxf6 65.gxf6 ♘xg4 66.f7 ♘e5 67.♔e8 ♘xf7 68.♔xf7 ♔h7=, neither does 64.♗h5 ♘g6+! 65.♔f7 (65.♔e8 ♘xh4 66.♗g4 ♘g6=) 65...♘xh4 66.♗g4 ♔h7 67.♗h5 (67.♔e6 ♘g6=) 67...♔h8 (after 67...♘xf5? 68.♗g6+ ♔h8 69.♗xf5, Black has to open the gate: 69...g6 70.♔xg6+–) 68.f6 gxf6 69.gxf6 ♘f5 70.♔g6 ♘d6=.

64...♘g6+

The greedy 64...♘xf3?, only helps White: 65.f6 gxf6 66.g6+–.

65.♔e8 ♘xh4 66.♗e4

It seems that White has won the domination duel. But this is deceptive... 66.f6 gxf6 67.gxf6 ♘g6 68.♔f7 ♘e5+ 69.♔e8 ♘g6 70.♗h5 ♘e5 71.♔e7 ♔g8 72.♔e6 ♘c6=.



66...♘g6!

The point of Black's defence. 66...♘xf5? 67.♗xf5 ♔g8 68.♔e7 ♔h8 69.♔f7+–.

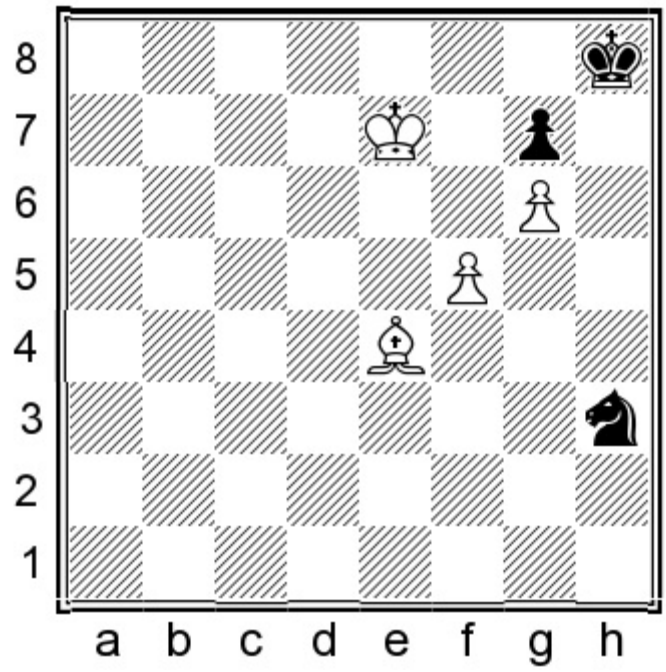
67.♔f7

67.fxg6 ♔g8 68.♔e7 ♔h8=, is a secure fortress.

67...♘f4 68.♔e7

Or 68.♗g2 ♘h5 (68...♘xg2?? 69.f6 gxf6 70.g6+–) 69.♔e7 ♘f4 70.♗f1 ♘d5+ 71.♔e6 (71.♔e8 ♘f4=) 71...♘f4+ 72.♔e5 ♘g6+=.

68...♘h3 69.g6



69...♘f4!

Surprisingly even 69...♘f2?!, saves the day in a study like way: 70.f6 (70.♗f3 ♘d3 71.f6 ♘e5 [71...gxf6? 72.♔f8+–] 72.f7 ♘d7 73.♗c6 ♘f8 74.♗e4 ♘e6=, but not 74...♘xg6+? 75.♔e8 ♘f8 76.♔xf8+–) 70...♘xe4 71.f7 ♘f6 72.f8=♕+ ♘g8+ and White must either allow stalemate or the fortress: 73.♕xg8+ ♔xg8=.

70.♔f7

No chances anymore for White: 70.f6 ♘xg6+ 71.♗xg6 gxf6=, or 70.♗f3 ♘d5+=.

70...♘h5 71.♗d5 ♘f6 72.♗e6 ♘g8 73.♔f8 ♘f6 74.♔e7 ♘e4 75.♗d5 ♘f6 76.♗f3 ♘g8+ 77.♔e6 ♘f6 78.♗c6 ♘h5 79.♗e8 ♘f6 80.♗f7 ♘h5 81.♔e5 ♘f6 82.♗b3 ♘d7+ 83.♔d6 ♘f6 84.♔e5 ♘d7+ 85.♔e6 ♘f6 86.♗c4 ♘g8 87.♗d5 ♘f6 88.♗f3 ♘g8 89.♗d1 ♘f6 90.♔f7 ♘g8 91.♔e6 ♘f6 92.♗b3 ♘g8 93.♗c4 ♘f6 94.♔d6 ♘h5 95.♔e5 ♘f6 96.♔f4 ♘d5+ 97.♔g5 ♘f6 98.♔f4 ♘d5+

½-½

Show in Text Mode

ROOK & KNIGHT POWER

The combined forces of a rook and knight (vs rook and knight as well, with pawns for both sides), cannot be underestimated, especially when initiative and cooperated harmony have been fullfield.

As it is well-known, the knight operates in all squares, so when supported or combining its force with its rook, then things can become scary for the opponent.

Targets must be drawn and then attacked; files, weak pawns, passed pawns and other assets are more easily get exposed.

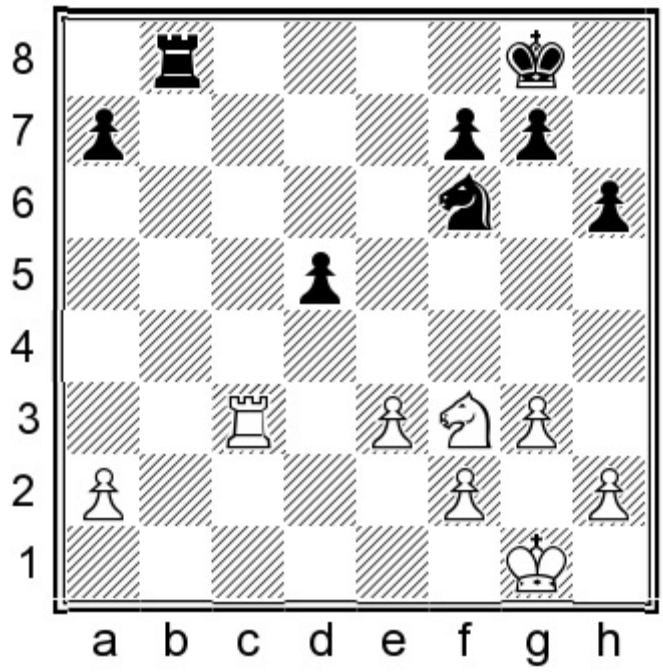
Offence and defence should be combined in harmony:

SOS Tip 1 — Advantages

1. Control the opponent's activity.
2. Applying pressure on the enemy position.
3. Exploiting pawn structure weaknesses.
4. Understand the better placed pieces concept.
5. Getting outposts for the knight.
6. Exploiting an open file.

EXERCISE 67
Nikolic Predrag
Portisch Lajos
D58 Ter Apel 1994

23...♘f6



EVALUATION

Here I am standing slightly better, due to my superior pawn structure, as the black d-pawn is isolated. My primary thought should be to control any black activity and then put pressure on Black's position. But of course Black can defend, as my advantage should be insufficient to win.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I think that I should defend my 2nd rank, avoiding any active black play against my a- and f-pawns. Opting for **24.♖c2 ♘e4 25.♘e5** (in such endings the outpost in front of the isolated pawn is not that important; the most important element is to attack it) **25...♖b7 26.♔f1**, when I am also improving my king.

PLAN B

The black d-pawn is well protected for the moment, so I should try to apply pressure on the black a-pawn. This is best done by **24.♖a3**, when after **24...♖b1+** (Black should opt for counterplay) **25.♔g2 ♖b2 26.♘e5 ♘e4 27.♘d3**, I should stand better.

PLAN C

The black rook, based on an open file, is rather active and I can't improve my position as long as it is remaining so. I should think to exchange rooks by **24.♘d4 ♖b2 25.♖c2 ♖xc2 26.♘xc2**, when I can approach the centre with my king and apply pressure on the weak black d-pawn. This is a safe ending, where I can play for two results.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 67

Plan A is best — see the game.

Plan B is nothing to be proud of; the black rook is rather active after **27...♖d2**.

Plan C is nothing special; the ending is drawn.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**10**	**10**

24.♖c2!

An important prophylactic move, as the a2- and f2-pawns needs protection. And White is not allowing any counterplay by placing his rook on his 7th rank. Later he will improve his king and knight.

24...♘e4 25.♘e5

In such endings the outpost in front of the isolated pawn is not that important; the most important element is to attack it!

25...♖b7 26.♔f1

The king, as usually in the endgame, takes his position...

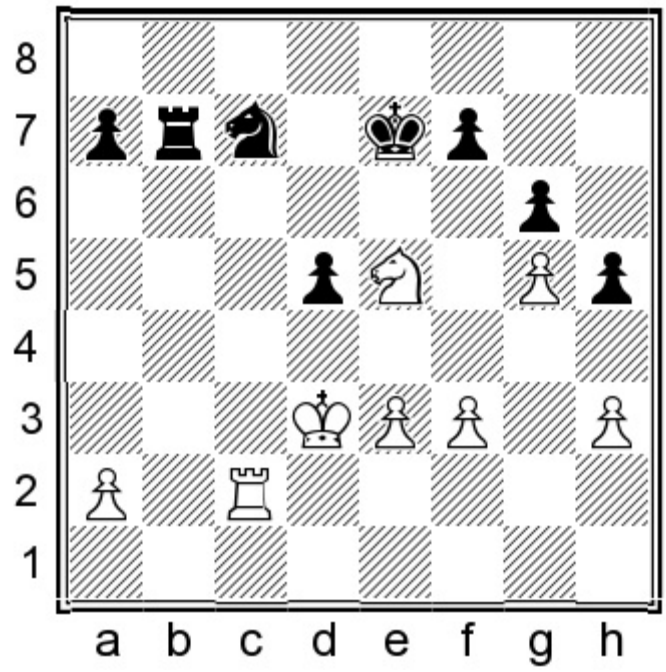
26...♔f8 27.♔e2 ♔e7 28.g4!

A typical move which gain space on the kingside. Of course the position is still equal, but White at least plans and executes, posing problems to Black.

28...♘f6 29.h3 g6 30.f3 h5?!

As the defender is supposed to do, Black tries to exchange pawns. But here Black should stay put with 30...♔d6=.

31.g5 ♘e8 32.♔d3 ♘c7



33.♖c5!

Now Black is in trouble, as White threats ♖a5 and ♘c6 or ♖c6-f6 among others.

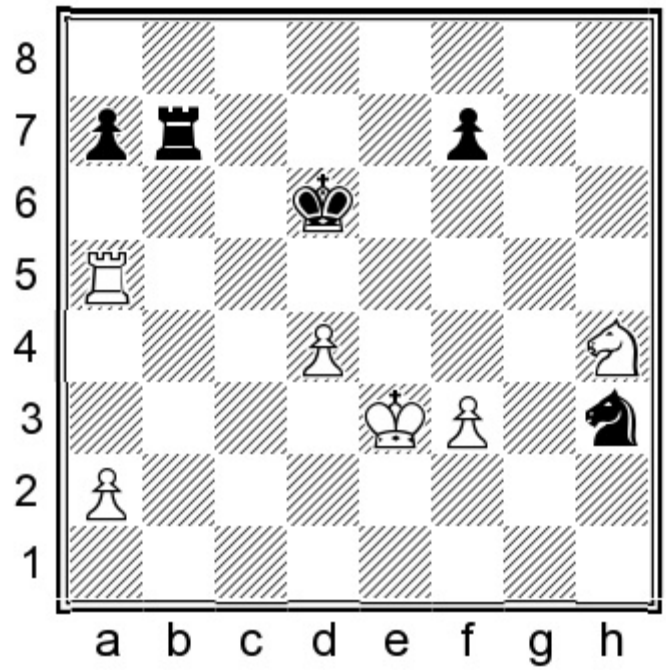
33...d4

Black has to sacrifice a pawn, since 33...♔d6? 34.♖c6+ ♔e7 (34...♔xe5? 35.f4+ ♔f5 36.♖f6#) 35.♖f6+–, is hopeless and 33...♔e8, leads to a difficult position after 34.f4 ♔e7 35.h4 ♔e8 36.♖c6±.

34.exd4 ♘e6 35.♖a5 ♘xg5 36.♘xg6+ ♔f6

Or 36...fxg6 37.♖xg5 ♖b6 38.♖a5 a6 39.f4±.

37.♘f4 h4 38.♘h5+ ♔g6 39.♘f4+ ♔f6 40.♖a6+ ♔f5 41.♘g2 ♘xh3 42.♖a5+ ♔e6 43.♔e3 ♔d6 44.♘xh4



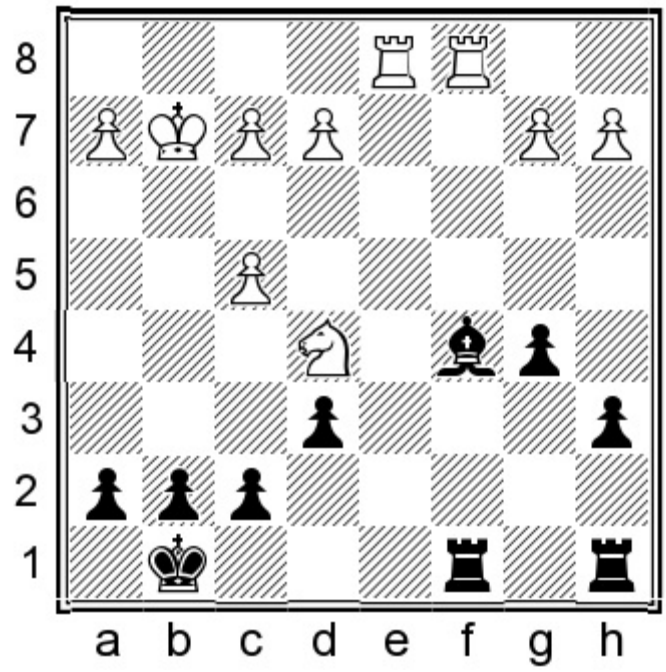
And White won later the ending, as he is a healthy pawn up.

44...♖e7+ 45.♔d2 ♔c6 46.♘f5 ♖d7 47.♔e3 ♔b6 48.♖e5 ♘g5 49.a4 ♘e6 50.♔d3 ♘d8 51.♖b5+ ♔c7 52.♖c5+ ♔b6 53.♘e3 ♘e6 54.♖b5+ ♔c7 55.d5 ♘g5 56.f4 ♘h3 57.f5 ♖e7 58.♘c4 ♘f2+ 59.♔c3 ♖e1 60.♖a5 ♔b8 61.d6 ♖c1+ 62.♔b3 f6 63.♘d2 ♖c8 64.♖b5+ ♔a8 65.♖b4 ♘d3 66.♖c4 ♖d8 67.♘e4 ♔b8 68.♖d4 ♘e5 69.♘xf6 ♖f8 70.♘e4 ♘d7 71.♖d5 ♖e8 72.♘c5 ♖e3+ 73.♔b4 ♔c8 74.♘xd7 ♔xd7 75.♔b5 ♖h3 76.♔a6

1–0

EXERCISE 68
Ribli Zoltan
Karpov Anatoly
E05 Amsterdam 1980

20.♔xg2



EVALUATION

I have achieved nearly equality, but actually achieving the draw is far from easy. My main problems can be found on my queenside weaknesses on the light squares and the bit better placed white pieces. I should be rather accurate.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

My primary obligation should be to kick the active white knight away and this is best done by **20...f6 21.♘f3 ♗f8** (after **21...♔f7**, White plays **22.♖d7+ ♗e7 23.♖cc7** and keeps some nasty pressure, while after **21...♔f8 22.♖d7 ♗e7**, White can achieve a pleasant position with **23.♖xc8+** (**23.♖cc7 ♖xc7 24.♖xc7 ♗d6 25.♖d7 ♗xf4 26.e3 ♗e5 27.♘xe5 fxe5 28.♖b7** ½-½ Novak,I-Prandstetter,E Prague 1981) **23...♖xc8 24.♘d4±**) **22.e3 g6**, when I am OK.

PLAN B

It should be logical to protect my 2nd rank and try to double my rooks on the c-file. For this I should opt for **20...♖c7 21.e3 ♖ac8 22.♖d7 a5 23.b3 f6 24.♖xc7 ♖xc7 25.♘f3 ♔f7 26.♘d4**, when White still keeps some pressure, but I should defend.

PLAN C

Exchanging the knight should be a good idea, so opting for **20...♗e7 21.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 22.♖d7 ♗f6**, looks right. White can probably preserve a tiny plus, but the position should be holdable.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 68

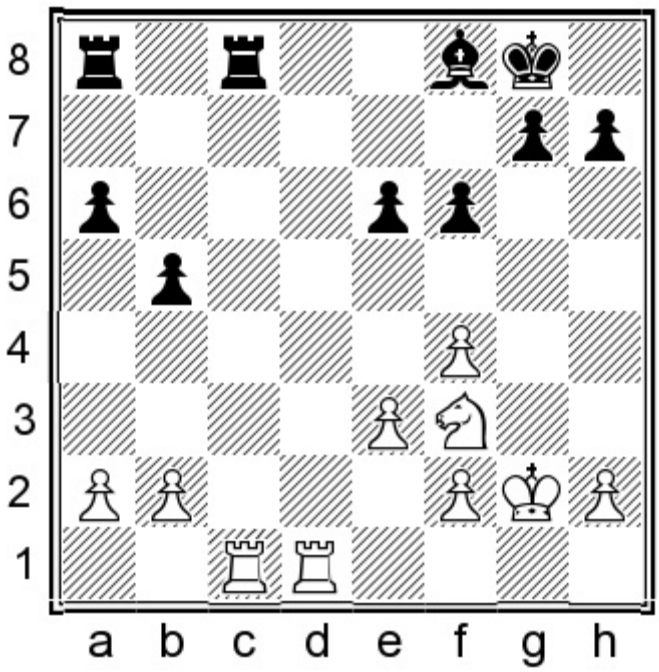
Plan A is not the best — see the game.

Plan B is quite pleasant for White after **21.b4! ♗d6 22.♖xc7 ♗xc7 23.♘xf7 ♔xf7** (**23...♗xf4 24.♘d8 e5 25.♘e6±**) **24.♖d7+ ♔f6 25.♖xc7 a5 26.bxa5 ♖xa5 27.♖c2±**.

Plan C is best and it should allow Black to hold, although with a lot of accuracy.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
25	**10**	**50**

20...f6?! 21.♘f3 ♗f8 22.e3



22...g6

Once again 22...♔f7, is met by 23.♖d7+ ♔e8 24.♖cc7.

23.b3 ♗b4

Or 23...♗a3 24.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 25.♖d7, etc.

24.h3

This time 24.♖xc8+?! ♖xc8 25.♖d7, is not so good as after 25...♖c2 26.♘d4 ♖xa2 27.♘xe6, Black can launch a counterattack with 27...♗e1!.

24...♔f8

Black should strongly think of 24...♗a3!? 25.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 26.♖d7 ♖c2 27.♖a7 ♖c6 28.♘d4±. Although White stands slightly better, it is very good to improve very much further.

25.♘d4 ♔f7

It seems that Black has defended well and he faces more or less not many problems anymore.

26.a4!

Asking for new targets and weaknesses on the queenside and on the light squares in general.

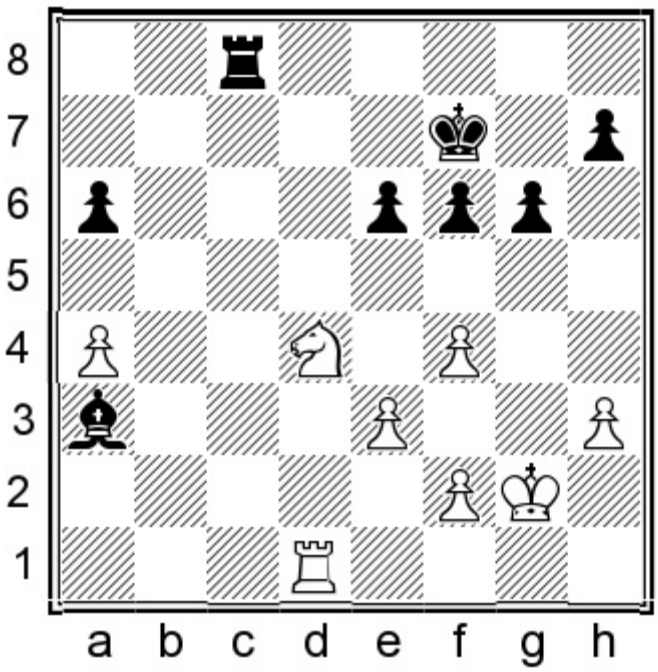
26...bxa4 27.bxa4 ♗c5?!

27...a5, was subsequently recommended as an improvement but after 28.♘b5 ♖xc1 29.♖xc1 ♖e8, White keeps an edge with 30.♔f3. It must be also noted that 27...♗c3?!, is not of a help, especially after 28.♘e2 ♗b2 29.♖d7+ ♔g8 30.♖cc7±.

28.♖c4! ♗a3

Black can also transpose into a rook endgame with 28...♗xd4 29.♖cxd4 ♖e8, though after 30.♖b4, White is better due to the more active position of his rooks and the weakness of the a6-pawn. He will place his rooks on the 6th rank, putting pressure on both a- and e-black pawns, and then he will improve his king.

29.♖xc8 ♖xc8



30.♖b1!

Now we see how useful White's 26th move was; his rook is invading via the b-file.

30...♖c4

After 30...♖c7, White penetrates with 31.♖b8, threatening to bring the rook to either h8 or a8.

31.♖b7+ ♗e7 32.♖a7 e5

As Black cannot continue with 32...♖xa4? 33.♘c6, he is forced to create new targets.

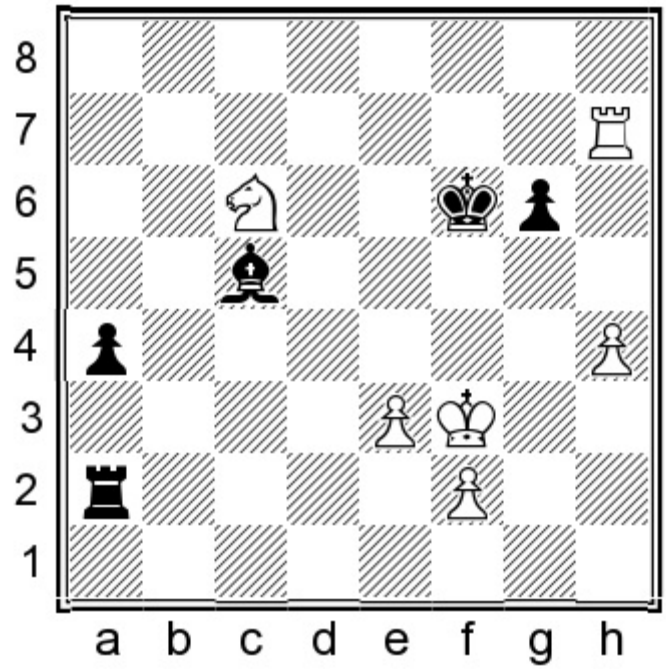
33.fxe5 fxe5 34.♘f3 ♖xa4 35.♘xe5+ ♔f6 36.♘c6 ♗c5

36...♗d6 37.♖xh7 ♖c4, might have made it more difficult for White due to the danger of Black's passed a-pawn.

37.♖xh7

Finally White won material, while Black's counterplay doesn't look so serious.

37...♖a2 38.♔f3 a5 39.h4 a4



40.♔e4!

A tactical improvement of White's position — that what we call technique; the way to improve the position by using small tactics!

40...♗f8

If 40...♖xf2?, then 41.♘d8, with the threat 42.♖f7#, is decisive.

41.♖a7?!

But here White doesn't react properly. 41.f4 ♗g7 42.h5 gxh5 43.♖xh5±, was good.

41...♗d6?!

The final mistake. Black should have gone for 41...♖xf2 42.♘e5 ♖b2 43.♖xa4 ♖b4+ 44.♖xb4 ♗xb4±, when the reduced material offer him fair chances for the draw.

42.f4

Now Black is plain lost.

42...♖h2

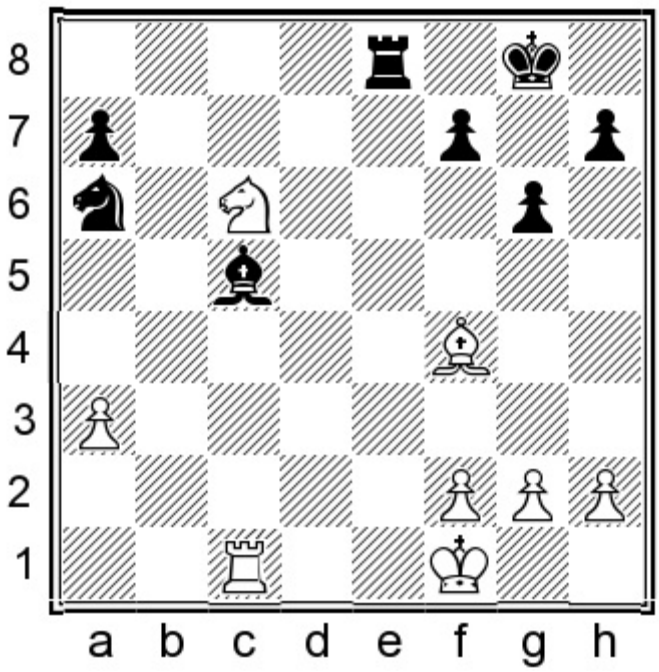
42...a3 43.♘e5! ♗xe5 44.♖a6+ ♔g7 45.♔xe5+–.

43.♖a6 ♔f7 44.♘e5+ ♗xe5 45.♔xe5 ♔g7 46.♖a7+ ♔h6 47.♖xa4 ♖xh4 48.♔f6 ♖h5 49.e4 ♖h4 50.e5 ♖h5 51.e6 ♖f5+ 52.♔e7 ♔g7 53.♔d6 ♖f8 54.♖a7+ ♔f6 55.♖d7

1–0

EXERCISE 69
Lputian Smbat
Tukmakov Vladimir
D97 Moscow 1983

26...♖e8



EVALUATION

My pieces are more actively placed. Especially my opponent's a6-knight is clearly out of play, on the edge of the board. But of course the position is quite near to equality, as Black doesn't have a permanent weakness and needs just a couple of moves to consolidate.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

My a-pawn is hanging and of course I should do something for that! Natural should be to place this pawn in a light square by **27.a4 ♖e6** (**27...♘b4?**, would be wrong: **28.♖xc5 ♘d3 29.♖e5±**) **28.♘b8**, when my position has been improved and I can sill exert a lot of pressure.

PLAN B

A favourable exchange is always welcomed and here I can ask for a good one by **27.♘b8 ♗xa3** (**27...♘xb8 28.♖xc5±**) **28.♘xa6 ♗xc1 29.♗xc1**, when I have got two pieces for a rook & pawn and I am standing better.

PLAN C

My main priority is to keep the a6-knight edged for as long as I can. So, I would like to opt for **27.♖c3! ♖e6 28.♘e5 g5** (Black could also think about **28...♗d6 29.♗h6 ♘c7 30.♘c6±**) **29.♗g3 ♔g7 30.♘f3**, when I am still exerting good pressure and Black has to find his way to equality.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 69

Plan A is the second best, when Black should go for **28...♗e7**,

with a tiny white plus, but not for **28...♘xb8 29.♖xc5 ♘c6 30.g4±**.

Plan B is out of the question as it is Black here who has excellent winning chances.

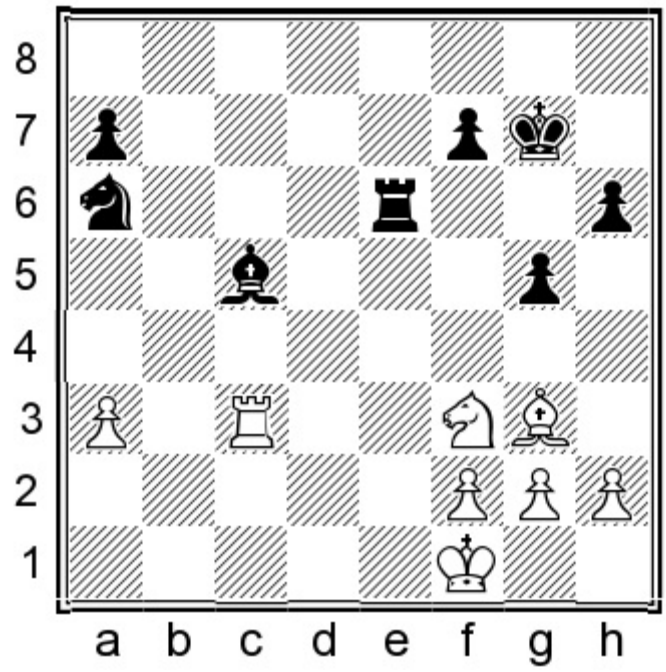
Plan C is the best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
35	**0**	**50**

27.♖c3! ♖e6 28.♘e5 g5

Black could also think about 28...♗d6 29.♗h6 ♘c7 30.♘c6±.

29.♗g3 ♔g7 30.♘f3 h6



31.h4!

Such moves are always unpleasant to meet.

31...g4?!

This advance further weakens Black's camp. Preferable was 31...f6, when White can retain some advantage after 32.h5 ♔f7 33.♖d3, planning ♘d4 or ♘d2, though Black can of course defend himself for a long time.

32.♘e1!

It turns out that the knight is heading for the f4-square.

32...♗d6 33.♗xd6 ♖xd6 34.♖c4 h5 35.♔e2 ♘b8

The black knight is struggling to get back into the game. In the meantime new accessible targets have appeared in Black's camp (h5 and a7).

36.♖c5! ♔h6 37.♘d3 ♘d7 38.♖a5 a6 39.g3 ♖b6 40.♘b4!

By covering the b-file, White prevents the activation of the enemy rook.

40...♖e6+ 41.♔f1 ♔g7

Black cannot avoid material losses anymore: 41...♘b8 42.♘d3 ♖b6 (42...f6 43.♖xh5+!+–) 43.♘f4 (43.♖f5 f6 44.♘f4±) 43...♖b5 44.♖xb5 axb5 45.♔e2 ♘a6! 46.♘d5! (46.♔d2? b4!=) 46...♔g6 47.♔d3 ♔f5 48.♔d4 ♔g6 49.♘b4+–.

42.♖xa6

42.♖xh5, is equally satisfactory: 42...♘e5 43.♘d5±.

42...♖e8

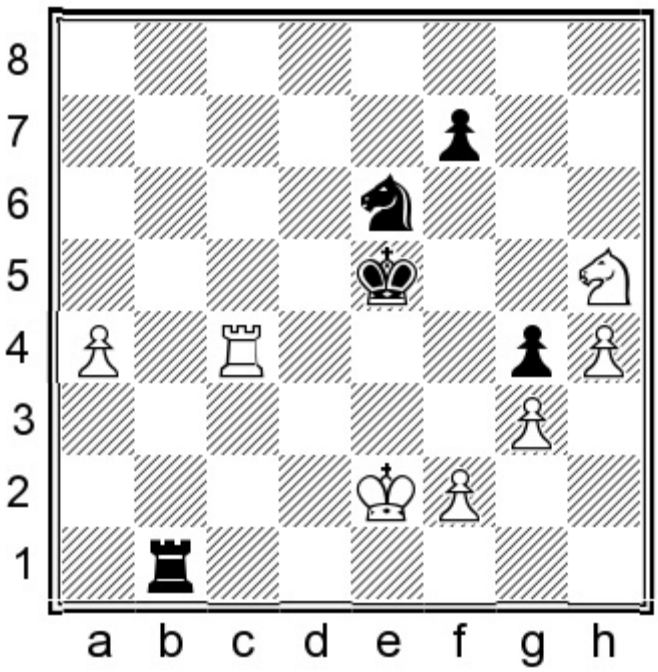
The alternative 42...♖e4, does not help either: 43.♘d3! (43.♘d5 ♘c5 44.♖c6 ♘e6 45.♘c3±) 43...♘e5

44.♘f4 ♘f3 45.♘xh5+ ♔f8 46.♖a8+ ♔e7 47.♖e8+!+−.

43.♘d5 ♘c5 44.♖c6 ♘e6 45.♖c4 ♖b8 46.a4 ♖b2 47.♘f4 ♖b1+

After 47...♘xf4 48.♖xf4, the rook ending is hopeless, since the white king simply walks to his passed pawn and Black lacks any counterplay.

48.♔e2 ♔f6 49.♘xh5+ ♔e5

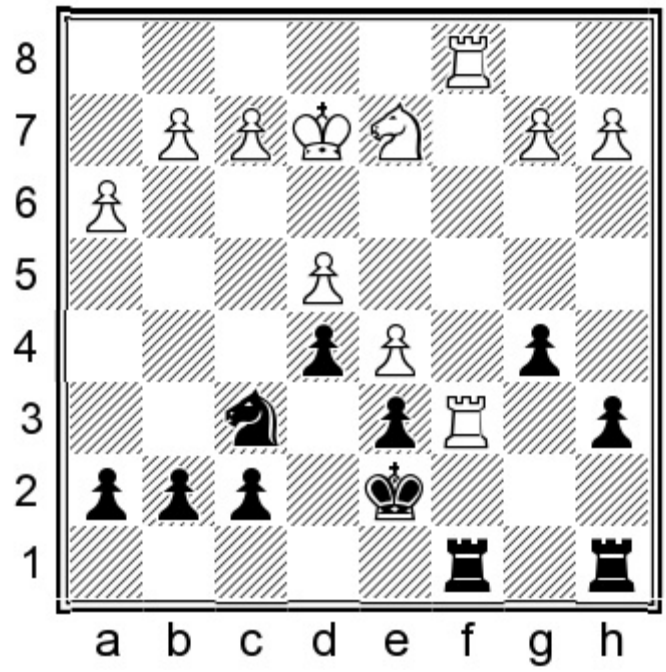


50.♖xg4 ♘d4+ 51.♔d3 ♖d1+ 52.♔c3 f5 53.♖g8 ♖c1+ 54.♔d2 ♘b3+ 55.♔e3 ♖c3+ 56.♔e2 ♖c2+ 57.♔f1 ♘d2+ 58.♔g1 ♘e4 59.♖e8+ ♔d6 60.♘f4 ♘xf2 61.♖e2 ♘h3+ 62.♔f1 ♖c1+ 63.♖e1

1–0

EXERCISE 70
Muzychuk Anna
Giri Anish
B51 Wijk aan Zee 2010

20.♖hc1



EVALUATION

I stand slightly worst due to my opponent's pressure down the open c-file, where she has doubled her rooks. I should find counterplay or exchange all rooks, before White strengths her position further.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I have to kick the white rook away from the c6-square, so I have to opt for **20...♘g8 21.a4 ♘e7 22.♖xc8 ♖xc8 23.♖xc8 ♔xc8 24.axb5 axb5 25.♔d3 ♔c7 26.♔c3 ♔b6 27.♔b4** (planning ♘b1-c3) and to find counterplay with **27...♘g6 28.g3 ♘f8 29.♘b1 ♘d7 30.♘c3 ♘c5 31.♘xb5 ♘d3+ 32.♔c3 ♘xf2 33.♘xd6 ♔c5 34.♘b7+ ♔b6**, securing the draw.

PLAN B

There is no need to exchange all rooks but just to control the c6-square with my knight. In this way I will free my a8-rook, seeking counterplay on the kingside. I can go for **20...♖xc6 21.♖xc6 ♘g8**, when I am ready for my plan.

PLAN C

I have a passive position, so I should seek counterplay and I think that I can find some on the kingside by **20...♘h5 21.g3 f5 22.♔d3 ♘f6**. I am not sure that I have entirely equalised, but I should be on the right track.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 70

Plan A is the best — the analysis is correct.

Plan B is bad — see the game.

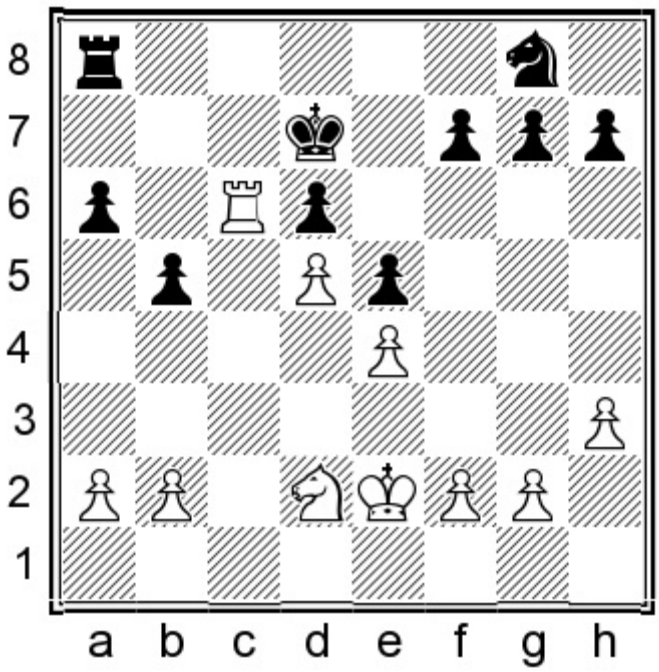
Plan C is the second best, as White keeps a slight edge by **23.f3**.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**0**	**30**

20...♖xc6?

This premature exchange nearly loses the game, as Black will not be able to change the second rook as well.

21.♖xc6 ♘g8



22.a4!

This is what Black missed and he is now in trouble. White will push her pawn to a5, creating a safe square for her rook on b6, so she can continue the pressure on a6.

22...♘e7

Unfortunately for Black he cannot opt for 22...bxa4? 23.♘c4+–.

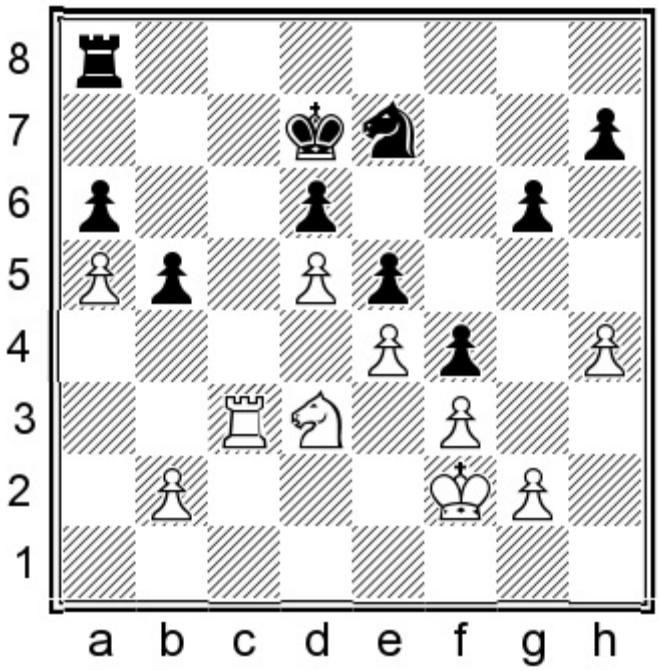
23.♖b6 ♔c7 24.a5 ♖a7 25.♘f3 f6 26.♘e1!

That's what Black missed — the knight is heading for b4, winning material. Just compare the rooks (that Black did not change)...

26...♘c8 27.♖c6+ ♔d7 28.♘d3 ♘e7 29.♖c3 f5

If 29...♖c7, then 30.♘b4 ♖a7 31.g4 and White will create a second front on the kingside (the concept of 'two weaknesses').

30.f3 f4 31.♔f2 ♖a8 32.h4 g6



33.g3!

Black is frozen on the queenside and White can win on the other side, as usual!

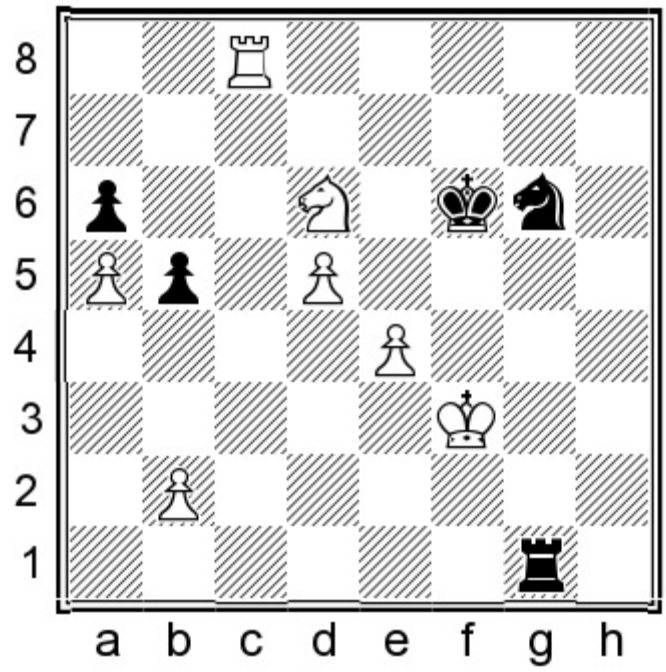
33...fxg3+ 34.♔xg3 g5

A desperate attempt to activate some pieces, which obviously doesn't work... 34...♖f8 35.♘b4 ♖a8 36.f4 exf4+ 37.♔xf4+–.

35.hxg5 ♖g8 36.♔h4 h6 37.gxh6 ♖g1 38.♖c1 ♖g6 39.f4

39.♔h5 ♖g2 40.♖h1+–, was even better.

39...♖xh6+ 40.♔g3 exf4+ 41.♘xf4 ♘g6 42.♘e6 ♔e7 43.♘d4 ♔f6 44.♘f5 ♖h5 45.♖c8 ♖g5+ 46.♔f3 ♖g1 47.♘xd6



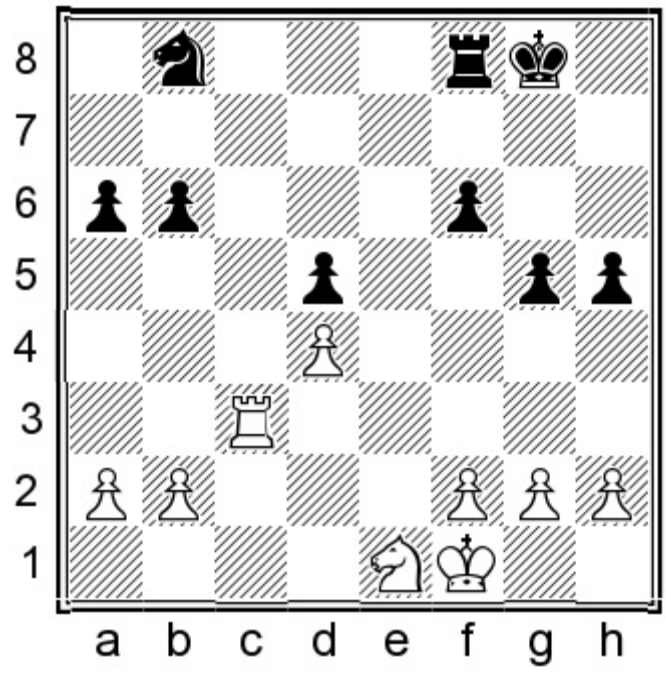
Two pawns-up — game over!

47...♖b1 48.♖e8 ♖xb2 49.♖e6+ ♔g5 50.♘f7+ ♔h5 51.♔e3 ♖b3+ 52.♔d4 ♖b4+ 53.♔c5 ♖c4+ 54.♔b6 b4?! 55.♖xg6!

1–0

EXERCISE 71
Botvinnik Mikhail
Alekhine Alexander
D41 Amsterdam 1938

26...h5



EVALUATION

The full control of the open c-file and the more active-to-be knight, should give me a pleasant advantage. Also the black pawn structure seems to be somewhat weak, especially the b6- and d5-pawns, a fact that adds to my plus.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

As there is no direct invasion of my rook (**27.♖c7 ♖f7 28.♖c8+ ♖f8**), I should improve my knight.

This is best done by **27.♘c2 ♔f7 28.♖c7+ ♔e6 29.♘e3**. As my threat is ♖b7, Black will have to go for **29...♖d8**, but after **30.g3** and f4, my advantage should be obvious, as I have invaded Black's camp and improved my knight.

PLAN B

My knight can be improved in a different way. After **27.♘d3 a5** (forced due to the threat 28.♘b4) **28.♖b3 ♘d7 29.♖b5**, I am winning a pawn.

PLAN C

Forcing new weaknesses on the kingside looks like a good option to me. So, I will opt for **27.h4**, when Black's defensive lines are breaking apart as his passive pieces cannot operate effectively all over the board. After **27...♔f7 28.hxg5 fxg5 29.♘f3 ♔f6 30.♘e5**, the difference in the knights' positions make the draw a miracle result.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 71

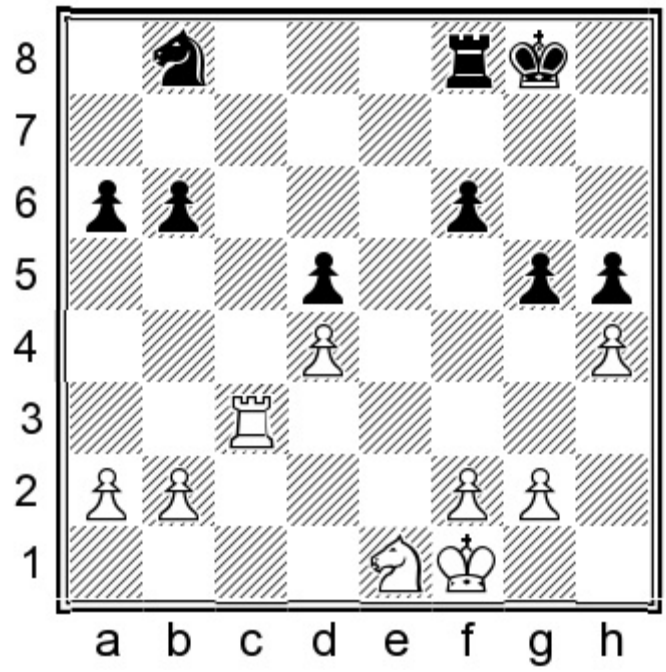
Plan A is quite playable and the second best — the analysis is correct.

Plan B is giving Black counterplay after **29...♔f7! 30.♖xd5 ♔e6 31.♖b5 ♖c8!**.

Plan C is the best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
35	**10**	**50**

27.h4!



Now Black's defensive lines are breaking apart as his passive pieces cannot operate effectively all over the board.

27...♘d7

27...gxh4 28.♘f3, cannot be considered seriously, but 27...♔f7, may have been the better option, though after 28.hxg5 (less clear is 28.♘f3 g4 29.♘e1 ♖e8! 30.f3 (but even here 30.g3 ♖e4 31.♘g2 ♖xd4 32.♖c7+ ♔e6 33.♘f4+ ♔d6 34.♖h7, the h-pawn gives White excellent chances) 30...gxf3 31.gxf3 ♖e6! and with the knight back in the game Black is still kicking) 28...fxg5 29.♘f3 ♔f6 30.♘e5 and the

difference in the knights' positions make the draw a miracle result.

28.♖c7

Back into business!

28...♖f7 29.♘f3! g4 30.♘e1

An excellent manoeuvre, losing two tempi, but eyeing the square f4 to collect the bonuses — the pawns on d5 and h5.

30...f5 31.♘d3

Compare the knights: the white one is ready to occupy excellent squares, attacking and collecting some pawns, while its counterpart is just trying to survive and cannot defend against all the threats.

31...f4

The key square is temporarily under control, but the pawn on f4 is added to the long list of objects for White to attack.

32.f3

32.♘b4, was winning a pawn, but with mathematical precision White fixes the new weakness. He knows: material benefit is just a short-term affair.

32...gxf3 33.gxf3 a5 34.a4 ♔f8 35.♖c6 ♔e7 36.♔f2 ♖f5 37.b3

There is no need to hurry.

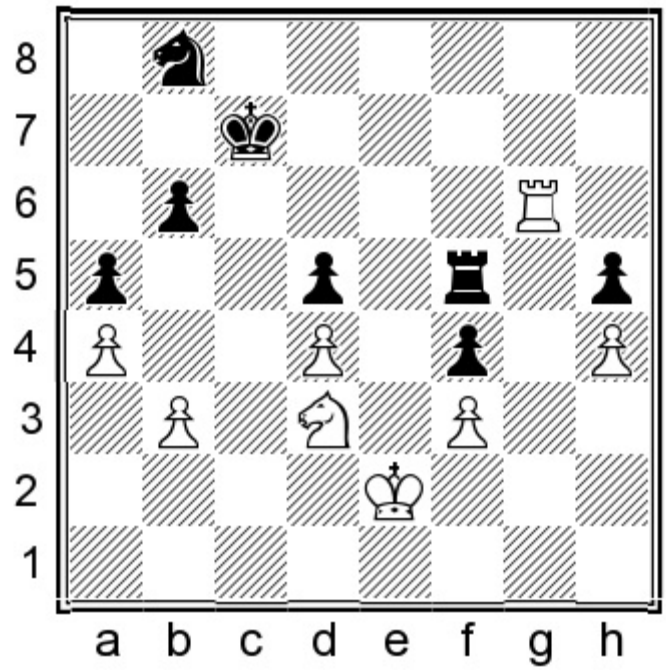
37...♔d8 38.♔e2 ♘b8

Desperately trying to activate the poor steed:

39.♖g6!

No way! One cannot escape one's destiny. 39.♖xb6? ♔c7 and 40...♘c6, gives Black counter-chances.

39...♔c7



40.♘e5

Making sure its counterpart will not participate in the game. Yes, both sides have a knight on the board; this is their only common feature!

40...♘a6 41.♖g7+

41.♖g5, was winning a bit quicker, the rook exchange leading to the promotion of the white pawn: 41...♖xg5? 42.hxg5 ♔d6 43.g6 ♔e7 44.g7. But in fact the way to win the position is a matter of taste.

41...♔c8 42.♘c6 ♖f6 43.♘e7+ ♔b8 44.♘xd5

At last! Harvest time!

44...♖d6 45.♖g5 ♘b4 46.♘xb4 axb4

In the end the two knights, with such different histories, both disappear together. But it gives Black no satisfaction, since the rook endgame is absolutely lost.

47.♖xh5 ♖c6

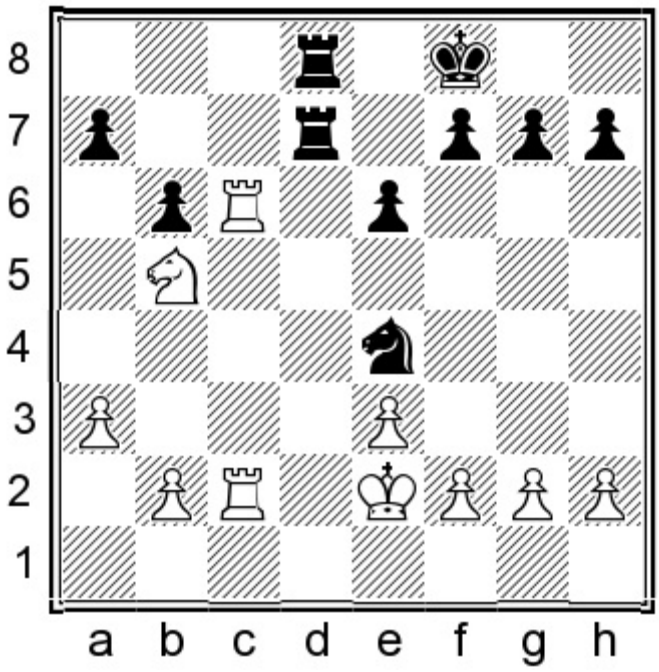
47...♖xd4 48.♖f5 ♔c7 49.h5 and the weak pawns are still around.

48.♖b5 ♔c7 49.♖xb4 ♖h6 50.♖b5 ♖xh4 51.♔d3

1–0

EXERCISE 72
Miles Anthony
Ligterink Gert
E12 Amsterdam 1978

22...♘e4



EVALUATION

So, both of us are fully controlling one of the two open files. But I think that the c-file is more important, as it is a bit further than the black king, making the invasion squares much harder to defend. Who wins the fight for the domination of his open file, he will have the first option to win the game as well.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Well, the threat of the invasion on d2 is rather annoying and I think that I have to stop it by any means. For this good looks **23.♘d4**, when after **23...e5 24.♘f3 f6 25.♖6c4**, the black knight will be kicked away.

PLAN B

The d2 invasion can be annihilated by the exchange of a pair of rooks. By playing **23.♖c8 ♖xc8 24.♖xc8+ ♔e7 25.♖c2**, followed by f3, I have stopped all Black's ideas, while I am still controlling the c-file.

PLAN C

I feel hat an excellent solution to my problems down the d-file is to go for **23.f4**. This looks scary, but by this I am securing the f3-square for my king and the important d4-square for my knight. After **23...g5** (**23...♖d2+ 24.♔f3**) **24.♖6c4 ♖d2+ 25.♔f3 f5 26.fxg5 e5 27.h4 ♖d1**, I can still be happy with **28.♖xe4 fxe4+ 29.♔xe4**, with great compensation.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 72

Plan A is losing the advantage and cannot be recommended.

Plan B is similar to Plan A; no advantage!

Plan C is the best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
10	**10**	**50**

23.f4!

An excellent solution to the problem! White secures the f3-square for his king and the important d4-square for his knight. Alternatives like 23.f3? ♖d2+ 24.♖xd2 ♖xd2+ 25.♔e1 ♖xb2∓,

or 23.♘d4?! e5 24.♘f3 f6=,

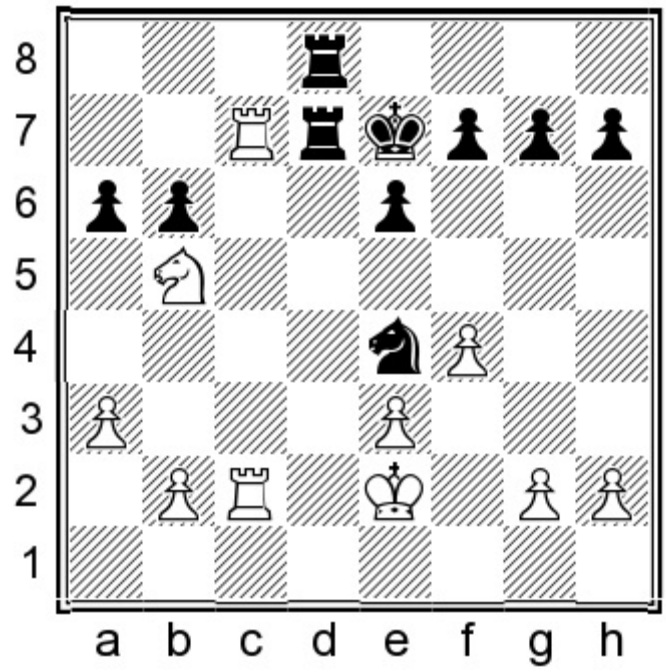
or, finally, 23.♖c8?! ♖xc8 24.♖xc8+ ♔e7=, were out of the question.

23.f4! ♔e7?

The rook check was no longer dangerous: 23...♖d2+?! 24.♔f3. And on 23...♘d6?! 24.♘xd6 ♖xd6 25.♖xd6 ♖xd6 26.♖c7, Black finds himself in a difficult rook ending. But probably it was time for Black to be active with 23...g5! 24.♖6c4 (24.g3 g4! 25.♘d4 h5∞) 24...♖d2+ 25.♔f3 f5 26.fxg5 e5 27.h4 ♖d1, but still White can be happy with 28.♖xe4! fxe4+ 29.♔xe4∞/=.

24.♖c7 a6

Or 24...♔e8 25.♘d4 ♖xc7 26.♖xc7 ♖d7 27.♖c8+ ♔e7 28.♘c6+ ♔f6 29.♘e5 ♖d2+ 30.♔f3 ♘g5+ 31.fxg5+ ♔xe5 32.♖c7±.



25.♘d4 ♔f6

Black loses a pawn after 25...♖xc7?! 26.♖xc7+ ♖d7 (26...♔e8 27.♖b7 ♖d6 28.g4±) 27.♘c6+ ♔d6 28.♖xd7+ ♔xd7 29.♘b8+ ♔d6 30.♘xa6.

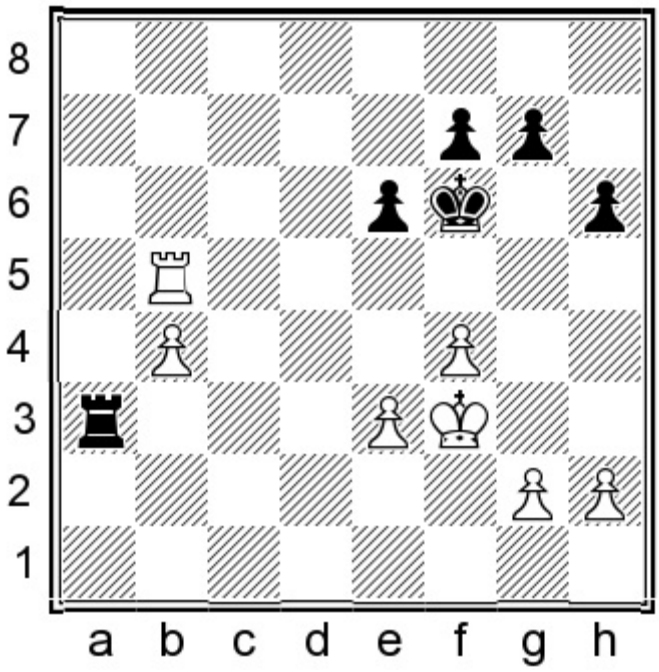
26.b4 h6

White is also on the top after 26...♖xc7 27.♖xc7 ♖d6 28.♘f3!± (threatening 29.♘e5), or after 26...g5 27.♖xd7 ♖xd7 28.♔f3 ♘d6 29.fxg5+ ♔xg5 30.♖c6±.

27.♖xd7 ♖xd7 28.♔f3 ♘d6 29.♖c6!

Black's position is already hopeless.

29...♘b5 30.♘xb5 axb5 31.♖xb6 ♖a7 32.♖xb5 ♖xa3



33.h4!

White is in no hurry to push his passed pawn but with the text is planning to pressurise the kingside by playing h5 and then g5-g5. Black resigned at this point and although it seems to be an early action, is fully justified by the evaluation of the ending: White is winning.

1–0

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CHAPTER 5.
VARIOUS PIECES ENDINGS

COMBINED POWER

The truth about endgames begins with pawns. Once you damage your pawn structure you have to live with it.

In combined endgames, which of course are more complex than usual, guides should be followed. One of them goes as:

SOS Tip 1 — Endgame General Guide

1. If faced with a choice of which pawn to advance, advance the pawn that is facing no opponent.
2. Always try to obtain a passed pawn.
3. Use bishops in open positions. Knights like closed positions and bishops like open ones. Endings are usually open, so bishops tend to be superior in the endgame. Reduce the mobility with pawns.
4. Bishops of opposite colour increase the chances of a draw. They can never capture one another! In addition, opposite coloured bishops can't get pass each other's blockade.

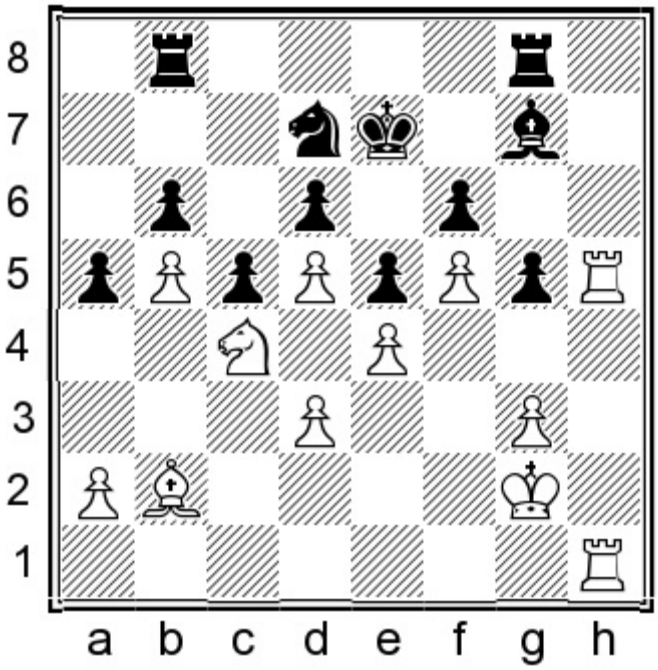
All endings are different, but methodologies do exist and can serve us well as a guide, devising the path to the correct endgame planning.

SOS Tip 2 — Winning Endgame Strategy

1. Advance the King. The king comes out of hiding in the endgame and becomes a critical factor. Advance the king toward passed pawns or toward pawns that are weak and vulnerable to attack. Otherwise, generally advance the king towards the centre.
2. Advance the passed pawn(s). As Aaron Nimzowitsch once said, passed pawns have a lust to expand. Don't go overboard, however. Advance the passed pawn only if doing so is safe. Advancing a pawn into the enemy's teeth, where its capture is certain, is essentially pointless.
3. Trade. Always be on the lookout to trade into a simpler ending by offering to exchange pieces. Generally speaking, the more material that's still on the board the more complicated is the ending. Don't trade from a winning ending into a drawn ending, of course but stay alert to the possibility of trading down into a simpler, yet still winning, ending.

EXERCISE 73
Grivas Efstratios
Bach Matthias

36...♔e7



EVALUATION

Let's take stock of the situation on the board. I have a strategically won position due to: 1. Control of the only open file, the h. 2. Better bishop. 3. Actively placed knight on c4. 4. Penetration possibilities. But how to turn my advantage into a win? I will have to think of the 'Rule of the Two Weaknesses'. I should combine the possibility to penetrate in the kingside (with my rooks or my king) with a possible sacrifice on the queenside!

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

Protecting my rook on h5 with **37.g4**, looks like a nice feature. After **37...♖h8 38.a4 ♖xh5 39.gxh5**, have also added a passed pawn to my advantages.

PLAN B

It is time to try to enter Black's position, even with an exchange sacrifice like **37.♖h7 ♘f8 38.♖7h6 ♗xh6 39.♖xh6**, with excellent compensation, as the black rooks are inactive.

PLAN C

I should combine play on both sides and my king should be placed on g4, waiting to penetrate if he is given the opportunity. The threat is stronger than its execution! So, I can go for **37.♔f3 ♘f8 38.♔g4 ♔d7 39.a4 ♔c7 40.♗c3**, when I am ready for a timed piece sacrifice on the queenside.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 73

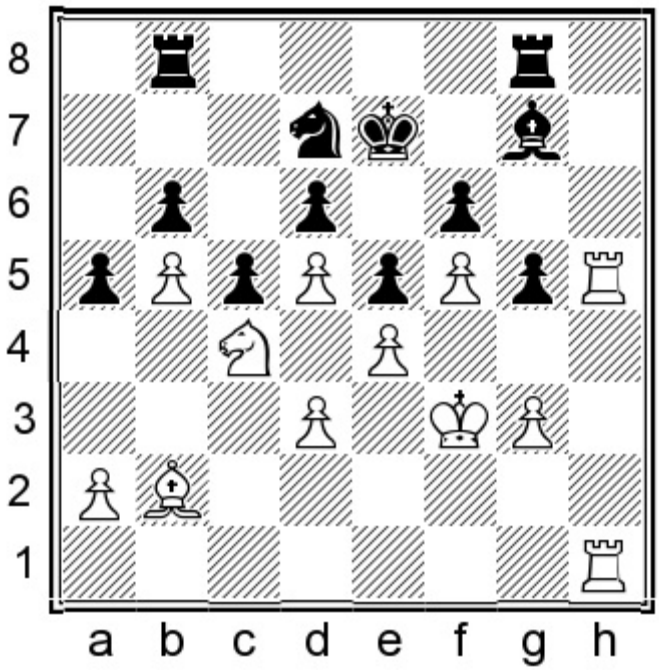
Plan A is not good, as White loses the possibility of penetrating with his king via g4 and h5. Also after **39...♗h6**, there isn't much to do.

Plan B is not giving much, especially after **39...♖g7! 40.♘xd6 ♖h7 41.♖xh7+ ♘xh7**.

Plan C is best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
0	**10**	**50**

37.♔f3!



The white king should be placed on g4, waiting to penetrate if he is given the opportunity. The threat is stronger than its execution! Note here that if White had pushed his g-pawn to g4, he couldn't win anymore!

37...♘f8 38.♔g4 ♔d7 39.a4 ♔c7 40.♗c3 ♖a8 41.♗d2 ♘d7 42.♖b1!

As there is not much (for the time being) on the open h-file, White tries to get the future queenside sacrifice under the most favourable conditions.

42...♖ab8 43.♗c3 ♖b7

What to do? 43...♖h8 44.♖xh8 ♖xh8 (44...♗xh8 45.♔h5!+–) 45.♗xa5!, wins: 45...bxa5 (45...♖a8 46.♔h5+–) 46.b6+ ♔b8 47.♖b5 ♖h1 48.♖xa5 ♖d1 49.♖a6! ♖xd3 50.♘xd6 ♖b3 51.♖a7+–.

44.♖h2 ♖a8

Black's rooks protect the a5 and b6 spots; the future sacrifice is lethal!

45.♗d2 ♖g8 46.♖a1 ♖a7 47.♗c3 ♖aa8 48.♖b2 ♖gb8 49.♖h1 ♖g8

Black is helpless, as the following variations prove: 49...♘f8 50.♗d2! (50.♗xa5 ♖xa5 51.♘xa5 bxa5 52.b6+ ♔b7 53.♖b5 ♖a8, is not clear) 50...♖b7 (50...♘d7 51.♖h7 ♖g8 52.♗xa5 ♖xa5 [52...bxa5 53.b6++–] 53.♘xa5 bxa5 54.b6+! ♔b7 55.♖b5 ♘xb6 56.♔h5+–) 51.♗xa5! ♖xa5 (51...bxa5 52.b6+ ♔d7 53.♖b5+–) 52.♘xa5 bxa5 53.b6+ ♔b8 54.♖b5 ♘d7 55.♖xa5 ♘xb6 56.♖b5+–. White has done everything on the correct way and now it is time to harvest. And the harvest comes as it was said; by the sacrifice of a piece on the queenside, which will allow the white pawns to roll.

50.♗xa5! bxa5

50...♖xa5 51.♘xa5 bxa5 52.b6+! ♔b7 53.♖b5 and so on!

51.b6+ ♔b8 52.♘xd6 ♖a6

Black cannot get active: 52...c4 53.♘xc4 ♘c5 54.♖h7 ♘xa4 55.♖b5+–.

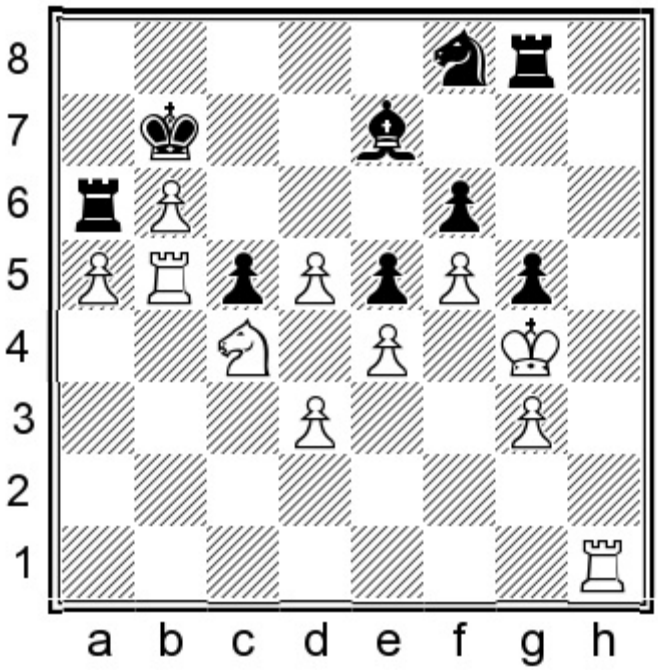
53.♘c4 ♔b7 54.♖b5 ♔b8 55.♖hb1

The black a-pawn is falling and then the connected white pawns will be lethal!

55...♗f8 56.♘xa5 ♗d6 57.♘c4 ♗e7 58.♖h1! ♘f8

58...♖xa4, loses to 59.♖h7 ♖e8 60.d6.

59.a5 ♔b7

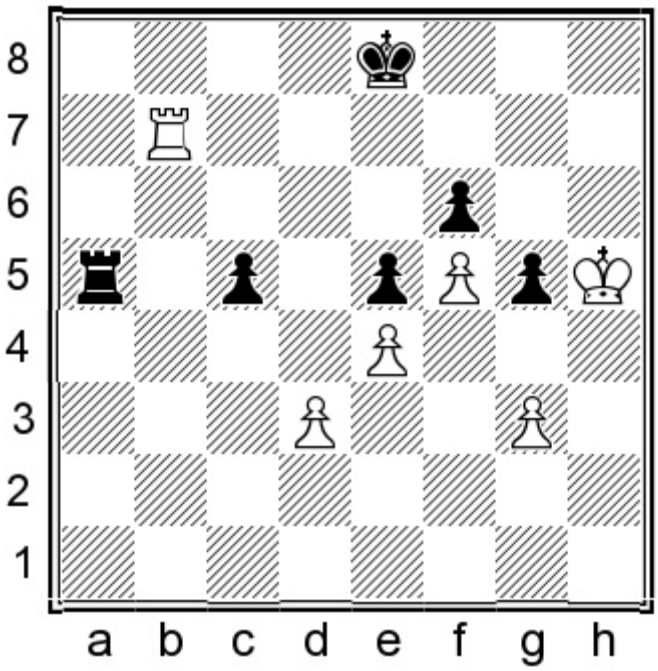


White has many ways here to win, but he choose the most ‘known’; transfer to a won rook ending.

60.d6 ♗xd6 61.♘xd6+ ♔c6 62.b7! ♘d7 63.b8=♕ ♘xb8 64.♖hb1 ♔xd6 65.♖xb8 ♖xb8 66.♖xb8 ♖xa5 67.♖b6+ ♔e7 68.♖b7+ ♔e8

Or 68...♔d6 69.♖f7 ♖a3 70.♖xf6+ ♔d7 71.♖e6 ♖xd3 72.♖xe5+–.

69.♔h5!



69...♖a6

69...♖a3 70.♔g6 ♖xd3 71.♔xf6+–.

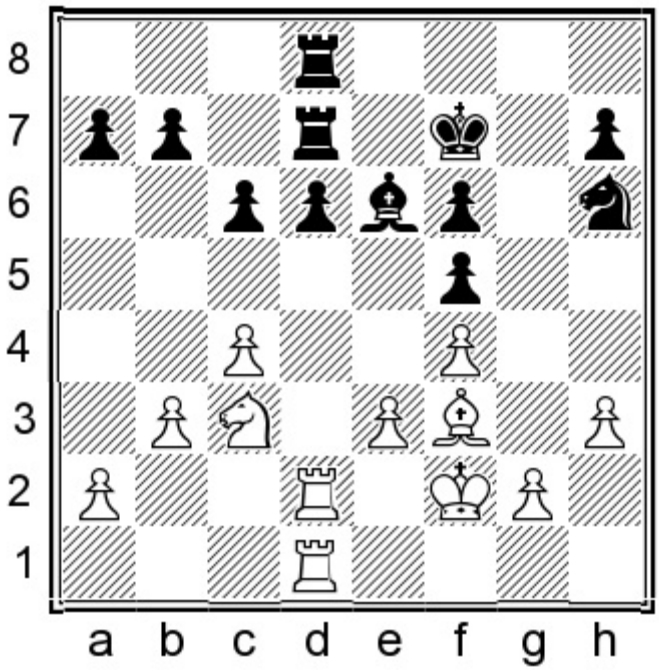
70.♔g6 g4 71.♖c7 ♖d6 72.♖xc5 ♖xd3 73.♔xf6 ♖xg3 74.♖xe5+ ♔d7 75.♖e7+! ♔c6 76.♖g7 ♖g1 77.e5 g3 78.e6 g2 79.♖g8 ♔d6 80.e7

Black resigned due to 80...♖e1 81.♖xg2 ♖xe7 82.♖d2+.

1–0

EXERCISE 74
Grivas Efstratios
Papas Konstantinos
A52 Athens 1999

22...♔f7



EVALUATION

I am obviously holding a large advantage. My opponent's pawn structure is a mess, containing weak (d6) or isolated and doubled (f6, f5, h7) pawns. Well, the only problem is that baring the d6-pawn, I am not attacking the rest. It seems that Black has defended 'successfully' for the moment, but I can further improve my position.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

New weaknesses are always welcomed. As Black has already a number of them in the centre and on the kingside, it is logical to look for new on the queenside. So, good seems to be **23.♗e2 ♔e7 24.b4 a6 25.a4**, when I am ready for b5, creating another weakness on c6.

PLAN B

Not accessible weaknesses cannot be considered fatal, so 'logical' is to deprive Black from some to get access to other important assets. By **23.e4 fxe4 24.♘xe4 ♔e7 25.♖e1**, I am gaining a tremendous

initiative in the centre, towards the black king.

PLAN C

Re-shuffling my pieces in better squares is a good way to improve the position. I will start by **23.♘e2! ♔e7 24.♘d4**, preparing the g4 advance, which will give me a nearly decisive advantage.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 74

Plan A is not the best, as there is no need for additional weaknesses — Black has enough! — and also because White creates one of his own, the c4 one.

Plan B is quite good, as White gets a very pleasant advantage.

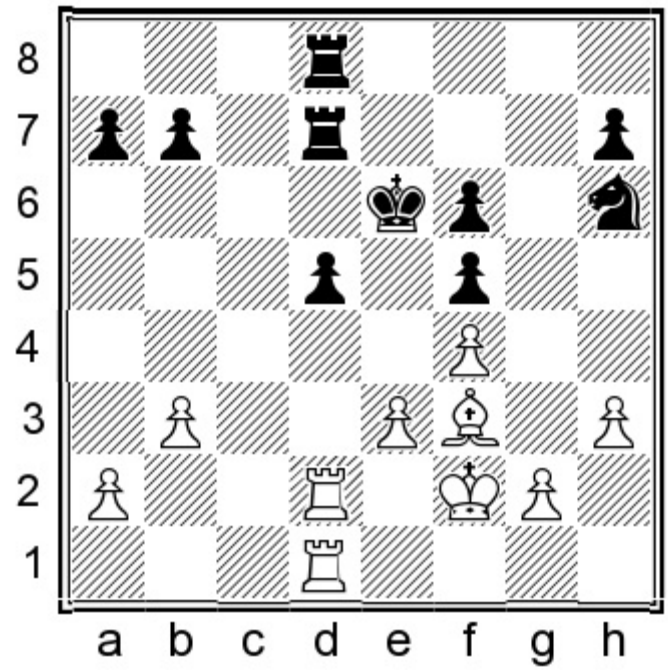
Plan C is best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
30	**45**	**50**

23.♘e2! ♔e7 24.♘d4 d5

What else? If 24...♖g8, White wins with 25.e4! fxe4 26.♗xe4 ♖g7 27.♖e1+–.

25.♘xe6 ♔xe6 26.cxd5+ cxd5



Black’s pawn structure is a mess.

27.g4!

And White increases his advantage by fixing it a bit! But he gets on return sufficient pressure against all Black’s pawns weaknesses.

27...fxg4 28.hxg4 ♘g8 29.♖h1 b6 30.♖h5 d4?!

This loses without a fight, as Black cracked under the heavy pressure. Forced was 30...h6 31.♖d4±.

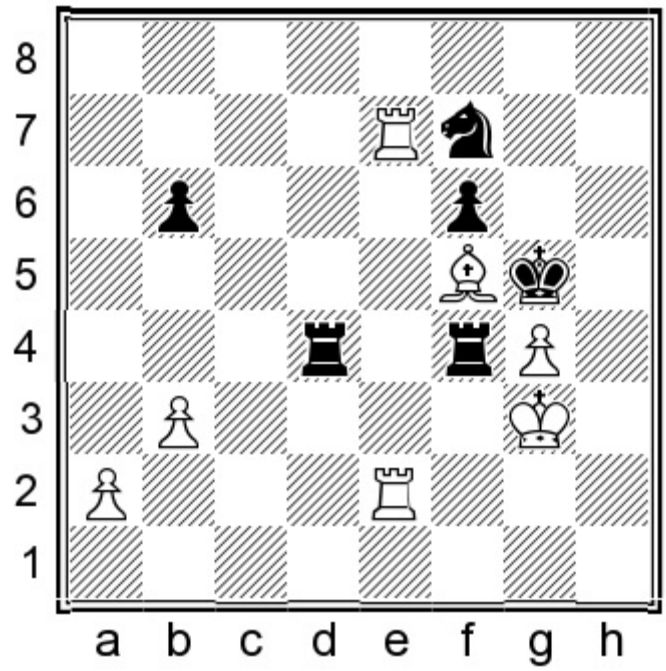
31.exd4 ♖xd4 32.♖e2+! ♔f7

32...♔d6 33.♔e3 ♖d1 34.♖xh7.

33.♖xh7+ ♔g6 34.♖xa7 ♖xf4 35.♔g3 ♖dd4 36.♖b7 ♘h6 37.♖be7! ♘f7

37...♘xg4 38.♗e4++–.

38.♗e4+ ♔g5 39.♗f5



Now Black is plain lost and he is even forced to give up the exchange.

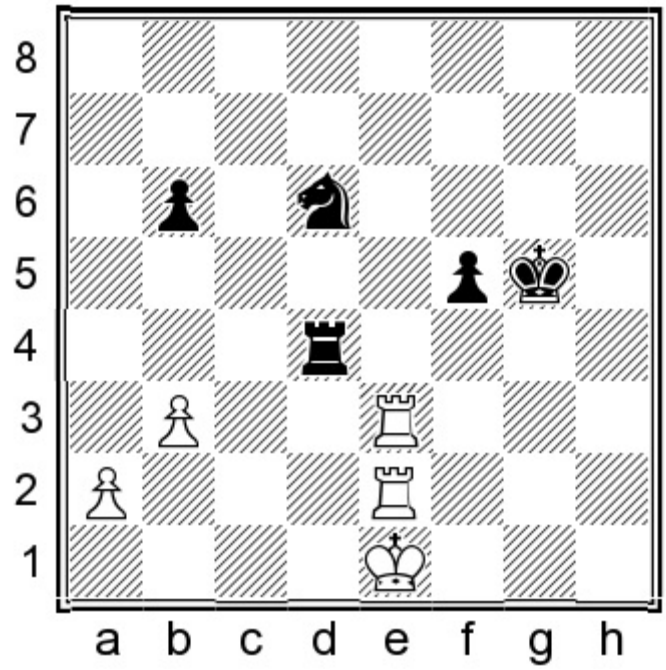
39...♖xf5

39...♘d6 40.♖g7+ ♔h6 41.♖h7+ ♔g5 42.♖h5#.

40.gxf5 ♘d6 41.♔g2 ♘xf5 42.♖7e4 ♖d3 43.♔f2

The rest of the game does not need any further comments.

43...♘d6 44.♖4e3 ♖d4 45.♔e1 f5



46.♖d2!

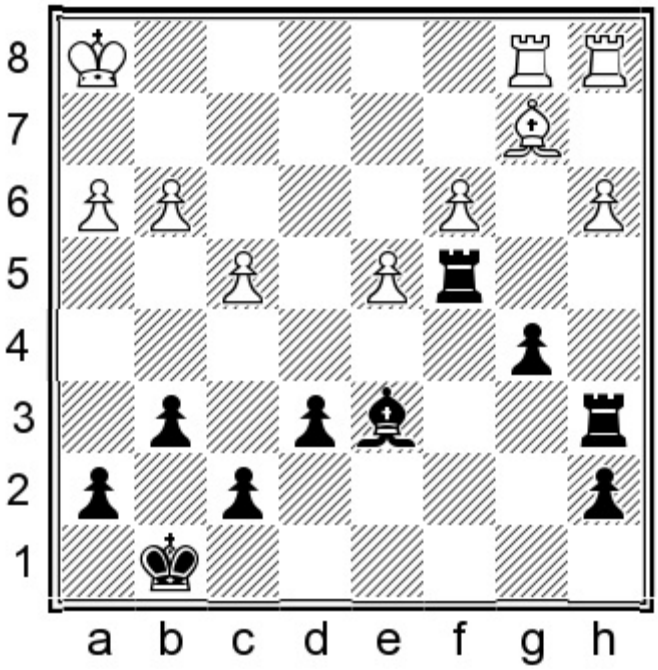
Exchanges help the strongest side to minimise the opponent's counterplay!

46...♖xd2 47.♔xd2 ♘e4+ 48.♔e2 ♔f4 49.♖h3 b5 50.a4 bxa4 51.bxa4 ♔g4 52.♖a3 ♘c5 53.a5 ♘a6 54.♖b3 f4 55.♖b6 f3+ 56.♔f2 ♘c5 57.♖b4+ ♔h3 58.♔xf3

1–0

EXERCISE 75
Thomas George Alan
Alekhine Alexander
B21 Baden-Baden 1925

38.g3



EVALUATION

I should be satisfied by my endgame, as my opponent has serious pawn weaknesses (c3 and a3 mainly), while his bishop is clearly inferior to mine (nearly all his pawns are placed in the same colour squares as his bishop). But of course the game is not won yet, as plans and ideas must come into force.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

New weaknesses are always welcomed. As Black has already a number of them in the centre and on the kingside, it is logical to look for new on the kingside. So, good seems to be **38...h5 39.h4 ♔f8**, when I am ready to centralise my king and look for a breakthrough.

PLAN B

There is nothing to be done immediately, so my primary thought should be to centralise my king by **38...♔f8 39.♔g2 ♔e7 40.♔f2 ♔d7 41.♔e2 ♔c6 42.♖a2 ♖ca4 43.♖ba1 ♔d5** and re-shuffle my rooks,

looking for a central breakthrough.

PLAN C

Winning material is always welcomed and here I can do it by **38...♖ca4 39.♔g2 ♗xa3 40.♖xa3 ♖xa3 41.♗xa3 ♖xa3 42.♖xb5 ♖xc3**, when I feel that I should win the resulting rook ending.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	**B**	**C**

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 75

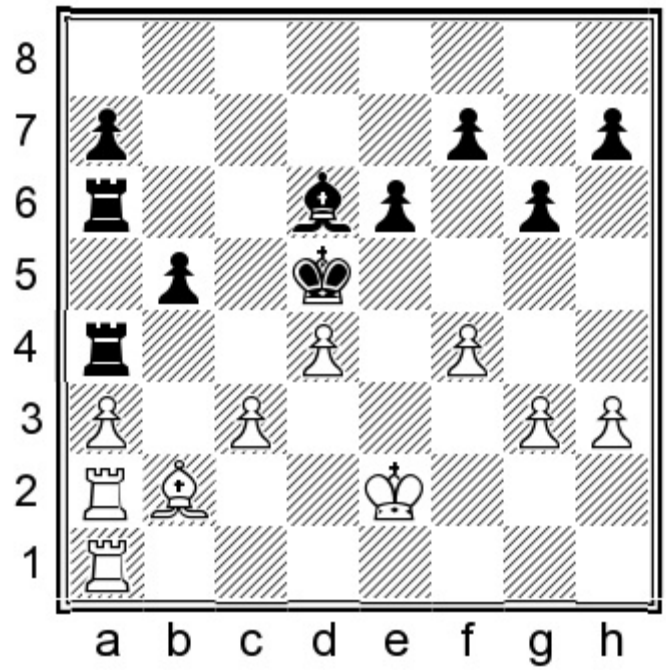
Plan A is fine and can be applied, although it must be considered second best.

Plan B is the best — see the game.

Plan C is not a good one, as the rook ending is a theoretical draw after **43.d5! exd5 44.♖xd5 ♖a3 45.g4**.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
45	**50**	**15**

38...♔f8 39.♔g2 ♔e7 40.♔f2 ♔d7 41.♔e2 ♔c6 42.♖a2 ♖ca4 43.♖ba1 ♔d5



44.♔d3

White is tied down to the defence and Black is obliged to find and execute an effective plan in order to break down this defence!

44...♖6a5 45.♗c1 a6

First step is protection; all Black's pawns are placed on the 'right' squares (opposite to those of the bishop).

46.♗b2 h5!

Forcing White to place his last pawn in the 'desirable' colour!

47.h4 f6?!

And here comes what is considered in general a strong plan, which will create more 'accessible' weaknesses in White's position (c3 and g3). Keep in mind this plan, as it is quite typical for these kinds of pawn-structures. But in this specific instance it was more accurate for Black to play 47...♗e7! 48.♗c1 (48.♔c2 ♔c4 49.♗c1 b4 50.cxb4 ♗xb4 51.♗b2 ♗d6 52.♗c3 ♖b5) 48...♗f8 49.♗b2 ♗d6 50.♗c1 f6!. This technique is called 'enlarging the battlefield' and it is widely used.

48.♗c1?!

More stubborn was 48.♔c2! ♖c4 (48...e5?!, is premature: 49.fxe5 fxe5 50.♔b3! [50.dxe5 ♗xe5 51.♖d1+ ♔e6 52.♖e1 ♔f5–+] 50...♖c4 [50...exd4 51.cxd4 b4 {51...♗xg3 52.♖g1 ♗xh4 53.♖xg6 ♗e7 54.♖h6 h4 55.♖h7} 52.♖g1! bxa3?! 53.♗c3, or 50...e4 51.♖g1 ♖c4 52.g4 e3 {52...♗f4 53.gxh5 gxh5 54.♖f1} 53.gxh5 gxh5 54.♗c1 ♗f4 55.♖e1 ♔e4 56.♖ae2] 51.♖g1 exd4 52.cxd4 ♖c8 (52...b4 53.a4! ♖c8 54.♖aa1 ♖f8 55.♖af1 ♖xf1 56.♖xf1 ♔e6 57.d5+ ♖xd5 58.♖f6+ ♔d7 59.♖xg6 ♖d3+ 60.♔c4 ♖xg3 61.♖h6=) 53.g4 ♖f8 54.gxh5 ♖f3+ 55.♗c3 gxh5 56.♖g5+ ♔c6 57.d5+∞) 49.♔b3 ♖aa4 50.♖e1 ♖c8 51.♖e3 g5 52.fxg5 fxg5 53.♖a1 gxh4 54.gxh4 ♖g8 55.♖ae1 ♖g6 56.♖f1 ♖c4∓.

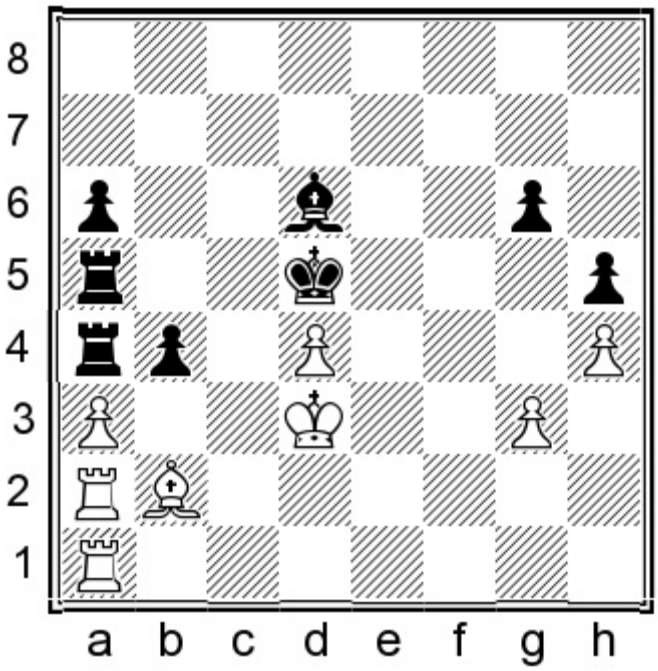
48...e5 49.fxe5 fxe5 50.♗b2

50.dxe5, offers an easy win to Black: 50...♗xe5 51.♗f4 (51.♖g2 ♖g4–+) 51...♗xf4 52.gxf4 ♖xf4 53.♖g2 ♖g4 54.♖xg4 hxg4 55.♖g1 ♖a4–+.

50...exd4?

It is true that there were some 'inaccuracies' that cast shadows on a game that could be considered a diamond. Better again was 50...♖c4! 51.♖g1 e4+ 52.♔e2 b4 53.cxb4 ♗xb4–+.

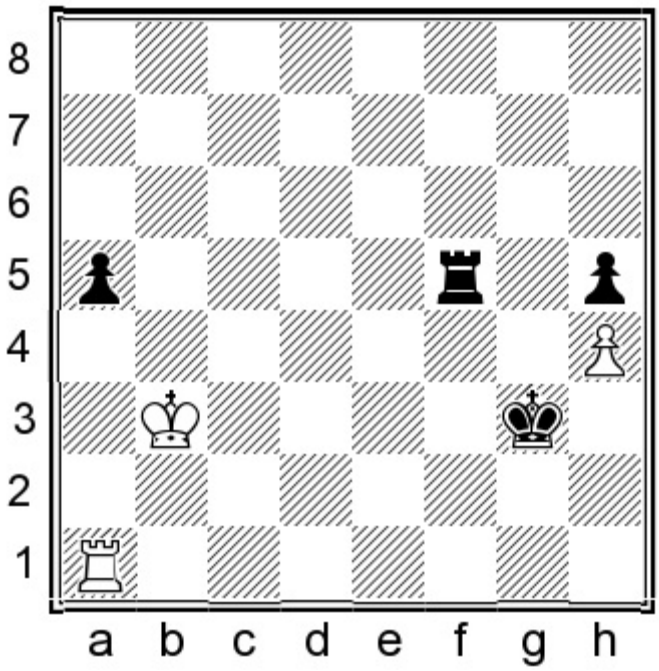
51.cxd4 b4



A bad solution would be 51...♗xg3? 52.♗c3! b4 (52...♗xh4 53.♗xa5 ♖xa5 54.a4! ♗f6 55.axb5 ♖xb5 56.♖xa6 ♗xd4=) 53.♗xb4 ♖b5 54.♔c3! ♗d6 55.♔b3 ♖aa5 56.♔c3=.

52.axb4?

Losing immediately. A better defensive try could be found in 52.♖g1! ♔e6! (52...bxa3 53.♗c3 ♗b4 54.♗a1 ♖b5 55.g4 ♗e7 56.gxh5 gxh5 57.♖e2 ♗f6 58.♖f2! ♖b3+ 59.♔c2 ♖b6 60.♖f5+ ♔e4 61.♖gf1 ♗xd4 62.♖1f4+=, or 52...b3 53.♖aa1 ♗xa3 54.♖xa3 ♖xa3 55.♗xa3 ♖xa3 56.♔c3 ♖a5 57.♔xb3 ♔xd4 58.g4! ♖e5 59.gxh5 gxh5 60.♖f1 a5 61.♔a4 ♔e4 62.♔b3 ♖f5 63.♖e1+ ♔f3 64.♖a1! ♔g3



65.♖a4! and Black cannot win anymore: 65...♖f4 66.♖xa5 ♔xh4 67.♔c3 ♔g4 68.♔d3=) 53.g4 hxg4 54.♖xg4 ♔f7 55.♗c1 bxa3 56.♗f4 ♗e7∓.

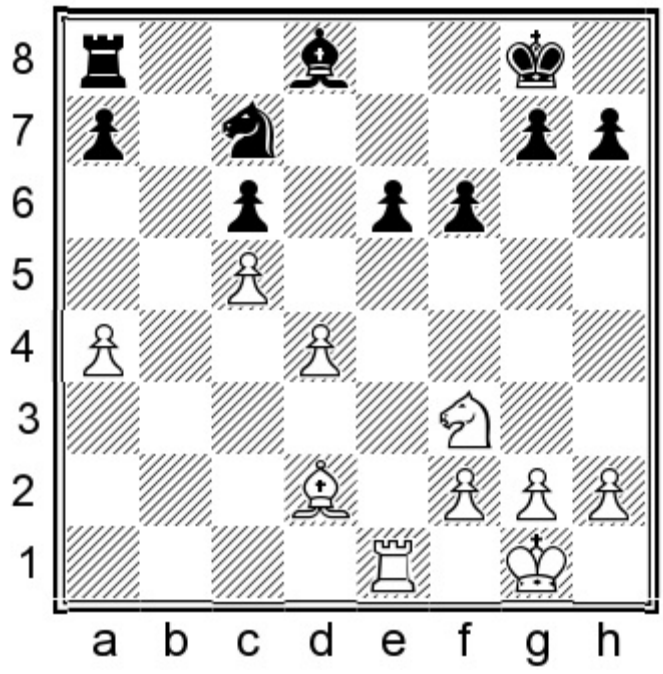
52...♖xa2 53.bxa5 ♖xb2

It must be noted that in some sources the game ends after Black's 51st move.

0–1

EXERCISE 76
Seirawan Yasser
Korchnoi Viktor
C10 Monte Carlo 1993

24...♘xc7



EVALUATION

This endgame is clearly better for me for various reasons, but mainly for two assets: controlling the b-file (soon) and applying pressure on Black's weak pawns (c6 and e6). My pieces also look more active than their counterparts.

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

The natural follow-up is to dominate on the open b-file and invade on the 7th rank. This is done by **25.♖b1 ♘d5 26.♖b7**. Then I will transfer my king in the centre and improve my knight (♘d2-c4), achieving a nearly decisive advantage.

PLAN B

Improving pieces and threat to win material, is essential. So, I can opt for **25.♗f4**, when my bishop improves, controlling the important h2-b8 diagonal (Black cannot oppose anymore his rook on b8). After **25...♔f7** (**25...♘d5 26.♗d6 ♔f7 27.♖b1±**) **26.♖b1 ♔e8 27.♘d2**, I am in full control.

PLAN C

I am thinking, like in Plan B, to improve my bishop, creating threats. But I will try it via the other diagonal: **25.♗a5 ♔f7 26.♖b1**, when I will invade in the 7th rank. I do not mind exchanging bishops, as I feel that mine is the inferior one.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 76

Plan A is the best — the rook has to take over the open b-file at once.

Plan B has a flow, as Black can sac a pawn by **25...♖b8! 26.♖xe6 ♔f7 27.♖e1 ♖b4**, achieving counterplay — see the game.

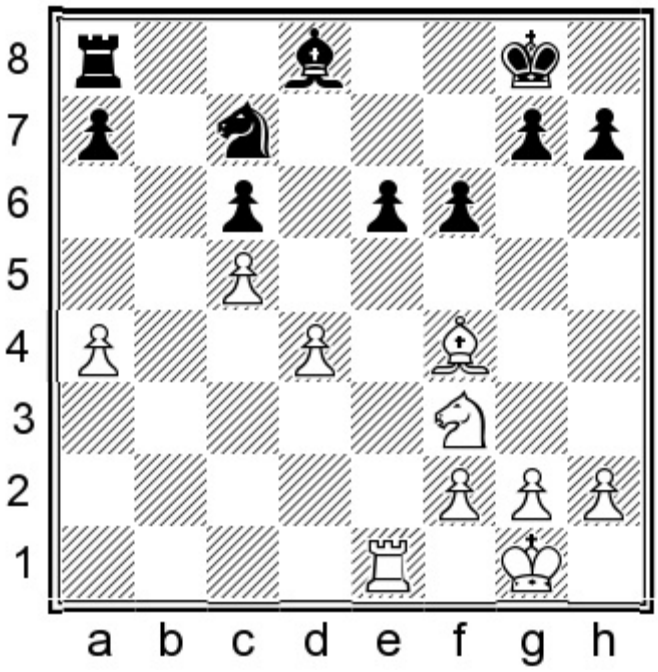
Plan C is similar to Plan B; Black has again to sac a pawn by (**25.♗a5**) **25...♖b8!** (**25...♔f7 26.♖b1**) **26.♗xc7 ♗xc7 27.♖xe6 ♔f7 28.♖e1 ♖b4**, trying to be active.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
50	**25**	**25**

25.♗f4?!

Good was 25.♖b1 ♘d5 26.♖b7±.

25.♗f4?!



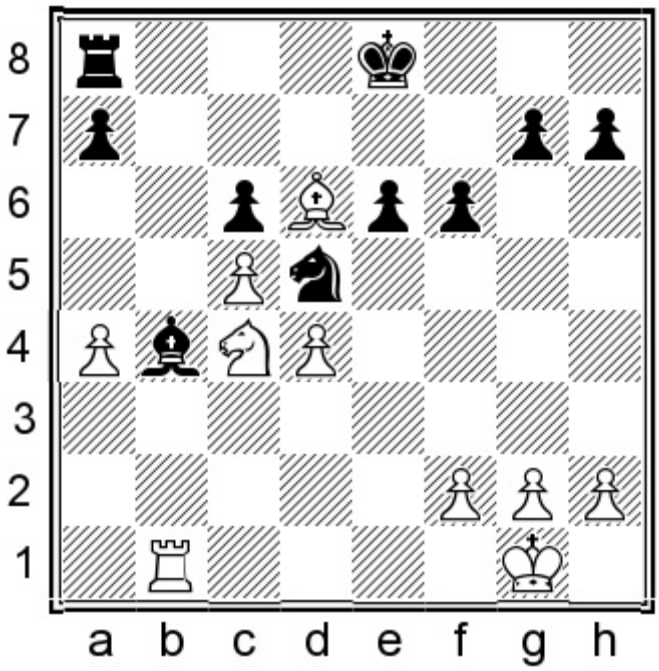
25...♔f7?!

25...♘d5?! 26.♗d6 ♔f7 27.♖b1±, was also bad, but Black had to opt for 25...♖b8! 26.♖xe6 ♔f7 27.♖e1 ♖b4, achieving counterplay.

26.♖b1 ♔e8 27.♘d2!

The d4-pawn no longer needs protection, so White improves the position of his knight.

27...♘d5 28.♗d6 ♗a5 29.♘c4 ♗b4



30.a5!

A nice, forced (Black was ready to play himself ...a5) and effective idea; the black a7-pawn will be fixed and then the b4-bishop will be forced to retreat, letting the white rook to invade and capture it.

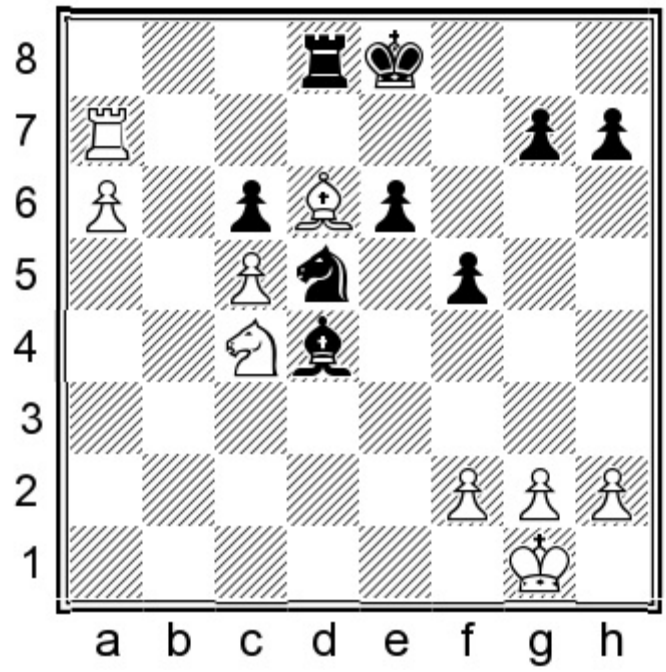
30...♖d8

30...a6? 31.♘b6 ♘xb6 32.axb6, would be decisive and 30...♔f7 31.a6 ♔g6 32.♘e3 ♗c3 33.♘c2±, was not pleasant either.

31.a6 ♗c3

The other option was 31...♖d7 32.♖b3! h5 33.♘e3 ♗a5 34.♖b8+ ♖d8 (34...♔f7 35.♘c4 ♗c3 36.♖b7 ♔e8 37.♘b6!+–) 35.♖b7 ♖d7 36.♘xd5 exd5 37.♗b8+–.

32.♖b7 ♗xd4 33.♖xa7 f5



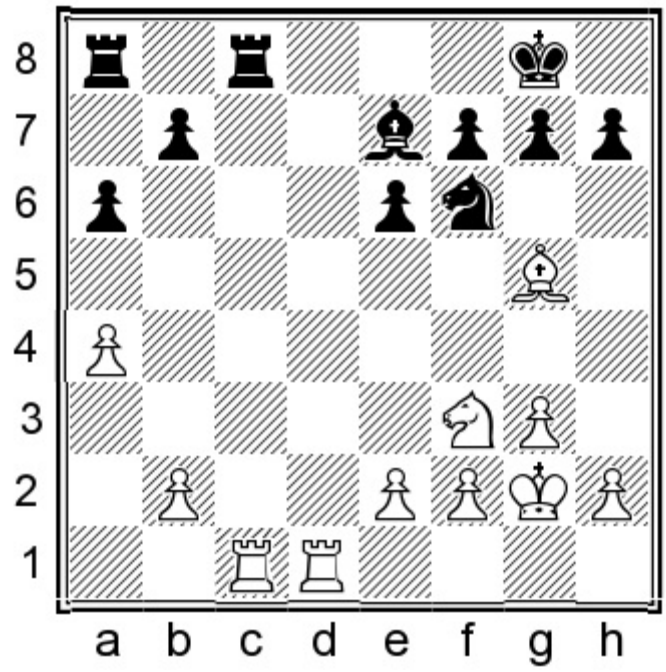
34.♖b7

And Black resigned as the passed a-pawn decides.

1–0

EXERCISE 77
Giri Anish
Leko Peter
E05 Baku 2015

20...♖fc8



EVALUATION

By simple moves I have achieved a small but permanent edge. My rooks are much more active on the two open files. And my king is much better placed on g2 than the black counterpart on g8. But all these shouldn't be enough for the point; I have to apply pressure on both the position and my opponent!

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

I need to get some more space and restrict the black bishop. For this I feel that I have to go for **21.e4 ♔f8 22.♗xf6 ♗xf6 23.e5 ♗e7 24.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 25.♖d7**, when I have already invaded to the 7th rank. Then I can think of improving my king and knight as well.

PLAN B

Invading the 7th rank is nearly always a good sign of a stable advantage and here I can do it by the simple **21.♗xf6 ♗xf6 22.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 23.♖d7 ♖b8 24.b3**, with a good plus.

PLAN C

In such structures the best place for knight, as shown by players like Ulf Andersson on many occasions, is on d3 controlling important squares as b4, c5 and e5. So, I can go for it by **21.♘e5 h6 22.♗d2 ♖d8 23.♘d3**, followed by the advance of my e- and f-pawns. This will increase my advantage.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 77

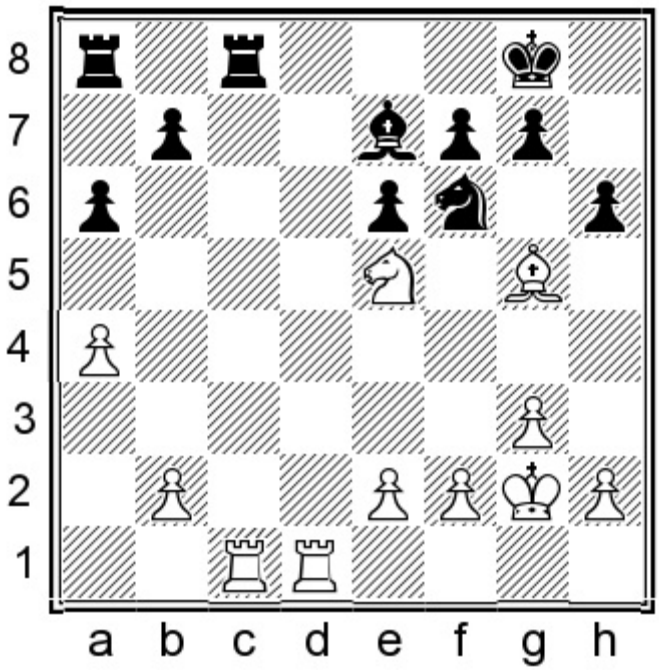
Plan A is not giving anything to White after the simple **25...♖b8 26.b3 ♔e8 27.♖c7 ♔d8**.

Plan B is also nothing special after the simple **24...♔f8**.

Plan C is the best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
15	**15**	**50**

21.♘e5! h6



22.♗d2

Preserving the bishop and staying away from ...♘d5 coming with a tempo.

22...♖d8

22...♘e4 23.♗e3±.

23.♘d3 ♖dc8

23...♖ac8, looks more consistent but after 24.♗a5 ♖e8 (24...♖xc1 25.♖xc1±) 25.f4, followed by ♔f3, White stands better.

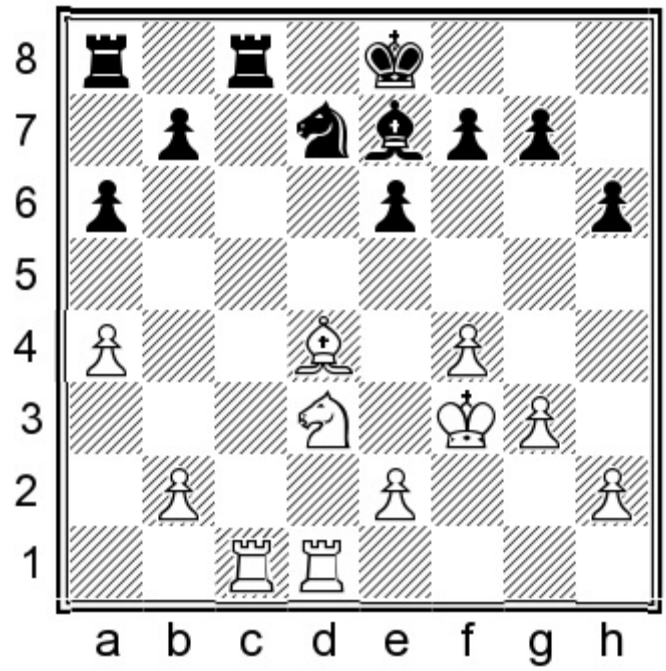
24.f4 ♔f8?!

24...♘d5 25.♔f3 f5±, followed by ...♘f6 and ...g5, might have led to a much more active position.

25.♔f3

Activating the king — White knows the endgame rules!

25...♘d7 26.♗e3 ♔e8 27.♗d4!



27...♗f6?!

Exchanging pieces here is not favourable for Black, because he will not be able to put-up a good defence. Preferable was 27...f6.

28.♗xf6 ♘xf6 29.♘e5

Each of White's pieces is much more active than Black's and in symmetrical structures it's the activity that makes the difference.

29...♔e7 30.e4 ♖xc1 31.♖xc1 ♘e8 32.♘d3 a5 33.♖c5 ♔d6 34.♖c3

Much better than 34.e5+?! ♔d7, with the idea of ...b6 and ...♖c8, which should give Black good chances to equalise.

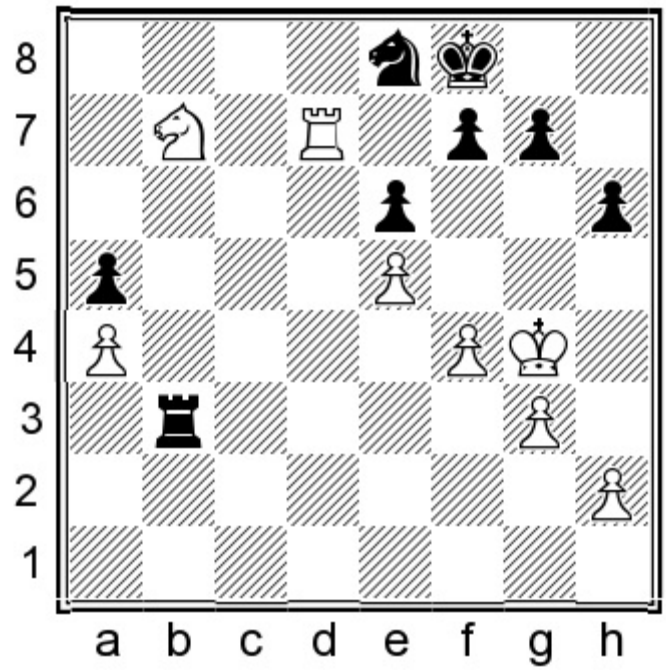
34...♖a6 35.e5+ ♔e7

The careless 35...♔d5? 36.♖c8, loses the knight!

36.♘c5 ♖b6 37.♖d3!

There is no way to stop the invasion on d7.

37...♖xb2 38.♖d7+ ♔f8 39.♘xb7 ♖b3+ 40.♔g4



40...♖b4?

This is losing, but even after the less evil 40...g6 41.♘xa5 ♖a3 42.♘b7 ♖xa4 43.♘d8 f5+ 44.♔h3! ♘g7 45.♘f7±, some of the black kingside pawns will fall.

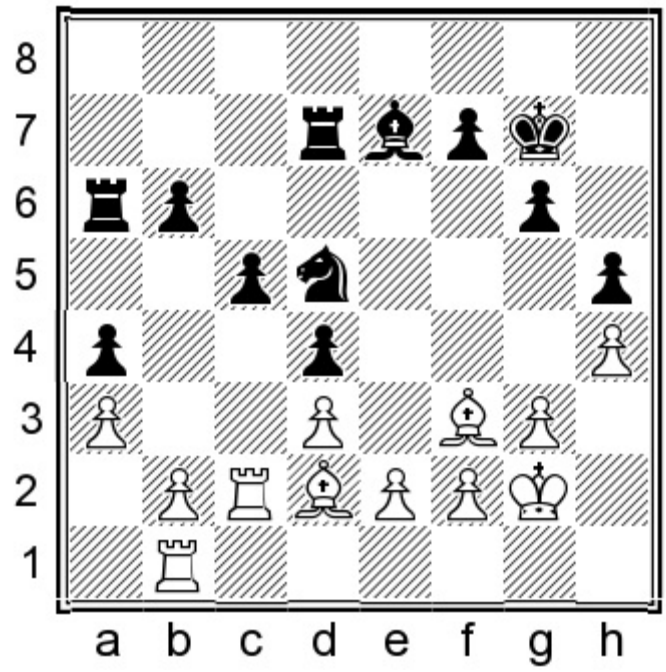
41.♘d8! ♔g8

41...♖xa4 42.♖xf7+ ♔g8 43.♖e7 ♔f8 44.♖a7+–.

42.♖e7 f5+ 43.♔h5 ♔h7 44.♖xe8 ♖b2 45.h3 ♖h2 46.♔h4 1–0

EXERCISE 78
Carlsen Magnus
Karjakin Sergey
A11 Wijk aan Zee 2013

38...♖a6



EVALUATION

My only asset in this position is the bishop pair, which might be proven good in the future; for the time being is not really much, as Black has good control over the centre and a mighty knight on d5. I will need soon to go for a breakthrough as b3, e3, or g4, or all of them!

PLAN — EXECUTION

PLAN A

The central breakthrough by **39.e4** (or **39.e3**) **39...dxe3** (**39...♘c7 40.g4 hxg4 41.♗xg4 ♖d8 42.h5**) **40.fxe3 ♗f6 41.♖d1**, looks like a good choice; after all the bishop pair needs an open centre. I think that here I hold a nice advantage and I can further improve my position.

PLAN B

I feel that I should try to open the kingside, as my opponent is lacking any defensive pieces in that wing. So, good seems to be **39.♖h1 ♘c7 40.g4 hxg4 41.♗xg4**, when I am ready for h5 as well.

PLAN C

Opening the queenside is a far better option than the other two breakthroughs, at least for the time being. So, I will opt for **39.b3 axb3 40.♖xb3 ♗f6 41.♖c4 ♖d6 42.♔f1 ♔f8 43.a4**, with a nice advantage.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAN		
A	B	C

Show/Hide Solution

SOLUTION 78

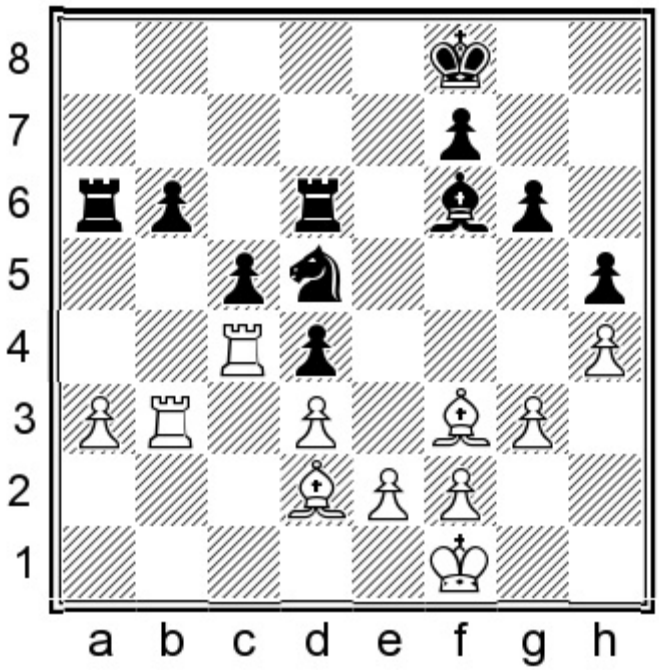
Plan A is fine and can be applied.

Plan B can wait a bit but it is fully playable.

Plan C is probably the best — see the game.

MARKS FOR PLANS		
A	**B**	**C**
45	**45**	**50**

39.b3 axb3 40.♖xb3 ♗f6 41.♖c4 ♖d6 42.♔f1 ♔f8



43.a4!

This looks like a weakness, but the a-pawn is threatening to be exchanged with Black's b-pawn, leaving the c5-pawn weak.

43...♘c3?

Looks like a great move, but in reality it only helps White. Black should choose instead 43...♔g7, when it is too early for White to go for 44.a5 bxa5 45.♗xd5 (45.♖xc5 a4 46.♖a3 ♘c3∓) 45...♖xd5 46.♖a4 ♗d8 47.♖b5 ♗b6 48.♗xa5=.

44.♗f4 ♖e6 45.e3!

Opening-up the position for the bishop pair.

45...♘xa4

45...♖xa4? 46.♖bxc3+–.

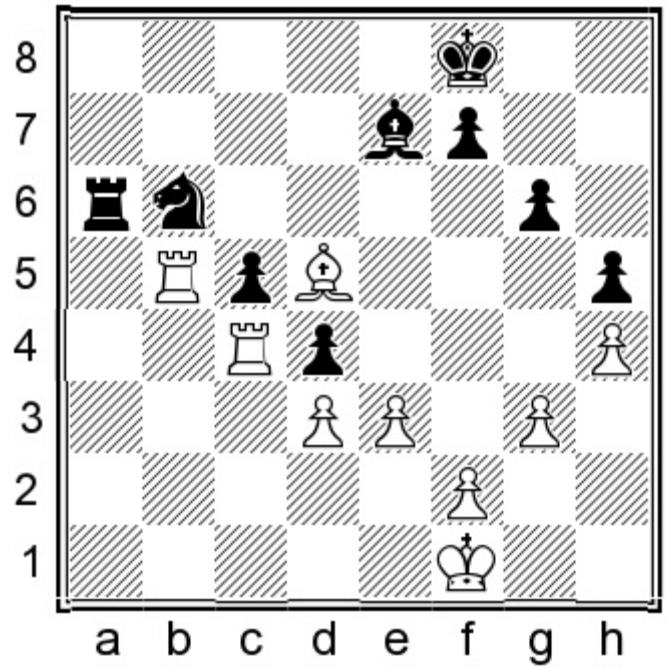
46.♗d5 ♖e7 47.♗d6?

Returning the favour! After 47.♗c6 ♘c3 48.exd4 ♘e2! 49.♗h6+ (49.♗d6? ♘xd4) 49...♗g7 50.dxc5! ♗xh6 (50...bxc5? 51.♖b8+) 51.cxb6 ♘xg3+ 52.♔g2! ♘f5 53.b7 ♖xb7 54.♗xb7, White has good winning chances.

47...b5?

Black had to find 47...♘c3! 48.♗c6 ♖a1+ 49.♔g2 dxe3 50.♗xe7+ ♗xe7 51.fxe3 ♖a2+ 52.♔f3 ♘d1∞/=.

48.♗xe7+ ♗xe7 49.♖xb5 ♘b6



50.e4! ♘xc4 51.♖b8+ ♔g7 52.♗xc4 ♖a7 53.f4

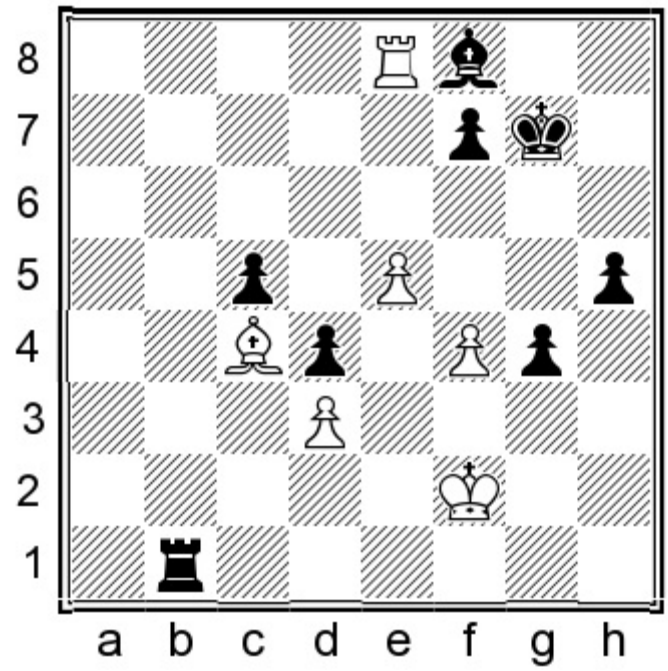
And now White has achieved a better opposite-coloured bishops ending, where Black will have to suffer for a long time.

53...♗d6 54.♖e8 ♖b7 55.♖a8 ♗e7 56.♔g2 ♖b1 57.e5 ♖e1 58.♔f2 ♖b1 59.♖e8 ♗f8 60.♖c8 ♗e7 61.♖a8 ♖b2+ 62.♔f3 ♖b1 63.♗d5 ♖e1 64.♔f2 ♖d1 65.♖e8 ♗f8 66.♗c4 ♖b1 67.g4!?

'Normal means' doesn't help, so White tries a very interesting idea to make use of his (remaining...) pieces.

67...hxg4 68.h5 ♖h1?

A human reaction and a logical one. But amazing as it may seem, this loses most likely. White's attack is just too strong. 68...gxh5!



69.f5 h4 70.f6+ ♔g6! 71.♖xf8 ♔f5! 72.♖h8 ♖b2+ 73.♔g1 ♖b1+, draws. White's king has no safe shelter from the rain of checks.

69.hxg6 fxg6 70.♖e6!

Now the g6-pawn is the target — or something like ♖f6-f7 as well! If this pawn falls then the connected central white pawns will carry the day.

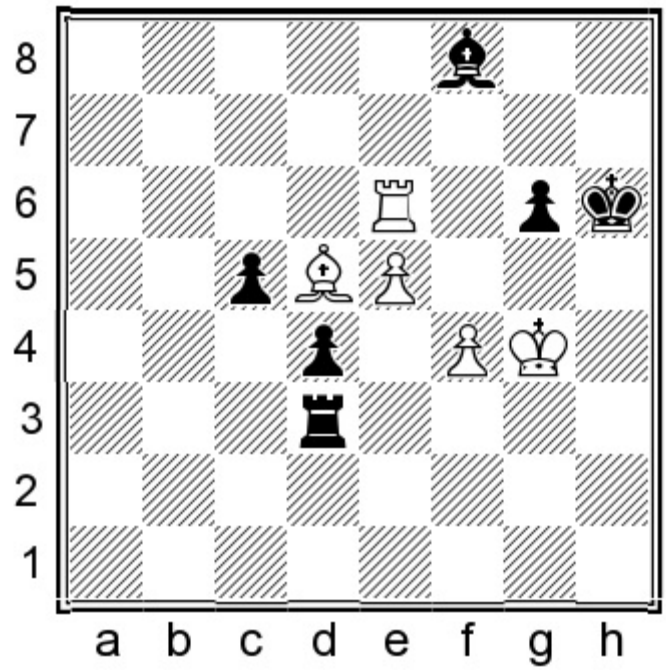
70...♔h6

70...♖h3?!, loses to 71.♖f6 ♖h8 72.♖f7+ ♔h6 73.♔g3+–.

71.♗d5 ♖h2+?!

This allows White's king to enter the attack directly. But it is not very like that Black can save himself anyway anymore. For example: 71...♖a1 72.♗e4 ♔h5 (72...c4 73.♖xg6+ ♔h5 74.♖g8 g3+ 75.♔xg3 ♖g1+ 76.♗g2 c3 77.♖xf8 c2 78.♖c8 c1=♕ 79.♖xc1 ♖xc1 80.f5±) 73.♖e8 ♗h6 74.♖h8+–, or 71...g3+ 72.♔xg3 ♖g1+ 73.♔f2 ♖g4 74.♔f3 ♖g1 75.♖c6 ♗e7 76.♖c8 ♖f1+ 77.♔g3 ♖g1+ 78.♔h3 ♖e1 79.♖e8+–.

72.♔g3 ♖h3+ 73.♔xg4 ♖xd3



74.f5

74.♗e4, was winning as well: 74...♖e3 75.♖xg6+ ♔h7 76.♗f5 ♔h8 77.♗e6 ♗g7 78.♔f5 ♔h7 79.♖g1 ♖h3 80.♗c4+– — White has a variety of choices! But he should be a bit careful, as 74.♖xg6+? ♔xg6 75.♗e4+ ♔f7 76.♗xd3 ♔e7 77.♔g5 ♗g7 78.♗c4 ♗h8 79.♔g6 d3 80.♗xd3 ♗xe5 81.fxe5 ♔e6, just leads to a draw!

74...♖e3 75.♖xg6+

The g6-pawn felt and the two connected central White pawns look unstoppable. On the other hand the black c- and d-pawns are not that mobile.

75...♔h7 76.♗g8+!

And not 76.♔f4?, due to 76...♗h6+=.

76...♔h8 77.♔f4 ♖c3?!

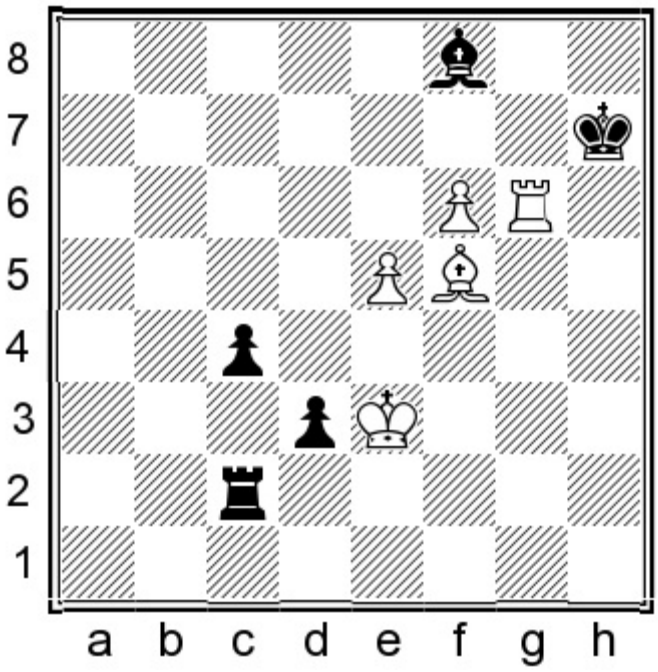
Another small mistake. Black should try to put-up a more stubborn defence with 77...♖e1 78.♗c4 ♔h7 79.♖a6 ♗h6+ (79...♖c1 80.♖a7+ ♔h6 81.♖a4 ♖c3 82.♖a6+ ♔h5 83.♗e2+ ♔h4 84.♖f6 d3 85.♗xd3 ♗g7 86.♖d6 ♗f8 87.f6+–) 80.♔g4 ♗f8 (80...♖xe5?! 81.♖a7+ ♔h8 82.♔h5 ♖xf5+ 83.♔g6+–) 81.♖a7+ ♔h6 82.♔f4 ♖c1 83.♖a4 ♖c3 84.♖a6+ ♔h7 85.♗d5 d3 86.♖a7+ ♔h6 87.♗e4 d2 88.♖d7+–. In all cases he would be lost anyway, but White was obliged to find more difficult moves than in the game.

78.f6 d3 79.♔e3!

The white king will deal with the passed black pawns — his counterpart can't be that helpful to his army...

79...c4 80.♗e6! ♔h7 81.♗f5 ♖c2

If 81...d2+, then 82.♔xd2 ♖f3 83.♗e4 ♗b4+ 84.♔e2 ♖a3 85.e6+– and White wins. But now it looks like Black has created something good...



82.♖g2+!

Excellent technique. After the rook exchange this is not a drawn ending!

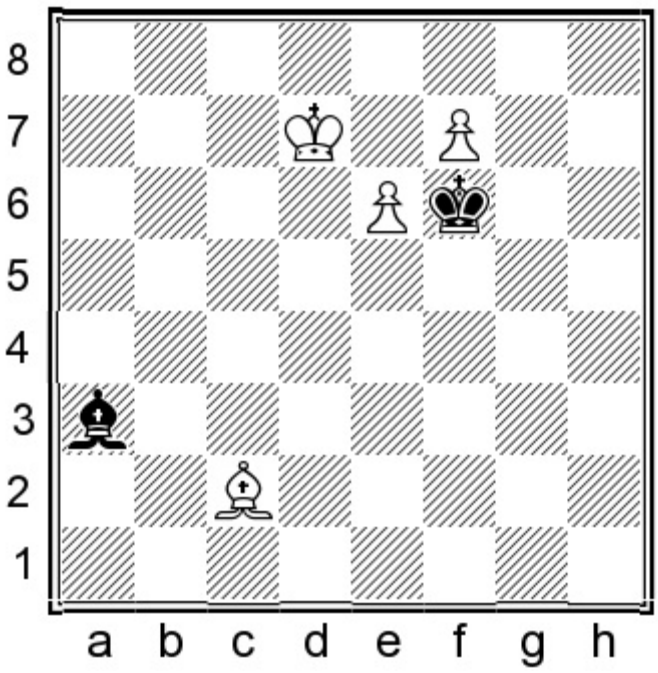
82...♔h6 83.♖xc2! dxc2 84.♗xc2 ♔g5 85.♔d4 ♗a3 86.♔xc4

And now White will play his king on d7 and push his pawns. Black will never have the time to achieve a theoretical drawn position.

86...♗b2 87.♔d5 ♔f4

87...♔h6, loses to 88.♔e6 ♗a3 89.♔f5 ♔h7 90.♗b3+–.

88.f7 ♗a3 89.e6 ♔g5 90.♔c6 ♔f6 91.♔d7



91...♔g7

91...♗b4 92.♗b3 ♗a3 93.♔e8 ♔g7 94.e7+–.

92.e7

Just in time, before Black play 92...♔f8, achieving a drawn position!

1–0

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